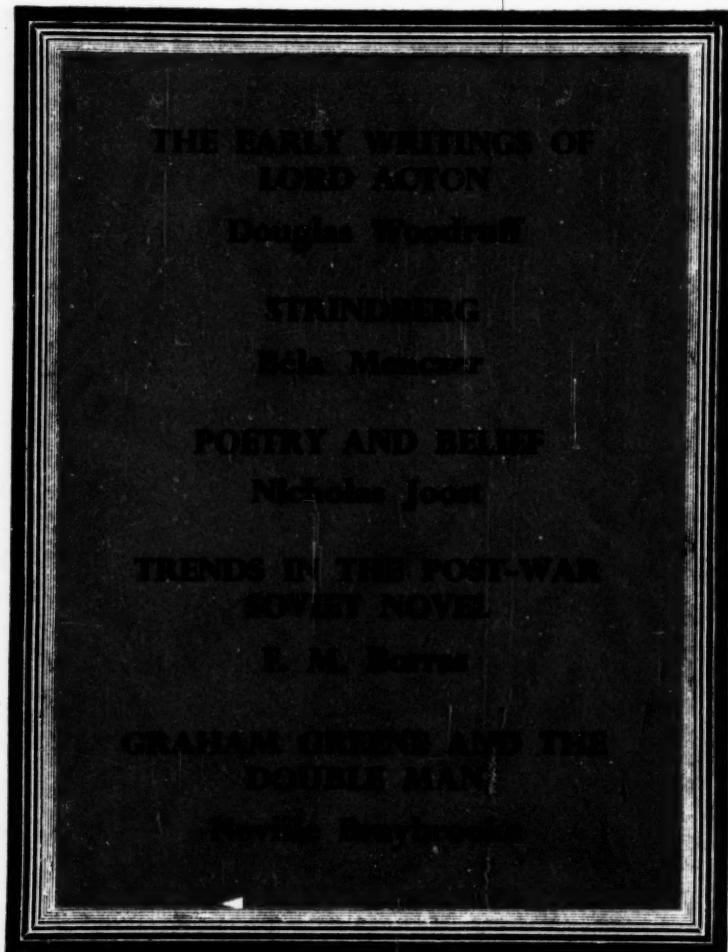


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# THE EARLY WRITINGS OF LORD ACTON<sup>1</sup>

## An Introduction

By DOUGLAS WOODRUFF

### I

AT the time of Acton's death, a generation had passed since he had abandoned his first career in Catholic letters. Cambridge had gladly and proudly claimed him and presented him to the world as he appeared in those last fruitful years of his life. The first book to appear about him, in 1904, was the edition of *Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone*, letters of the 'eighties and 'nineties, with an introduction by Mr. Herbert Paul, who wrote as a liberal appreciating a fellow liberal, a Gladstonian doing the honours for a fellow Gladstonian. To him Acton's religion was a mystery of which he could give no intelligible account, and although he wrote as a gentleman, anxious to use no language that would wound Catholics, what he wrote did so little justice to Acton's religion that Abbot Gasquet's *Lord Acton and his Circle* was brought out to redress the balance and give another picture.

The Introduction to this volume has provided up to now the main account of Acton's editorial activities. The bulk of the volume consists of a series of letters written by Acton to his friend and close collaborator in *The Rambler* and *The Home and Foreign Review*, Richard Simpson. These letters were given to Gasquet by Simpson's brother, but Gasquet only used and printed about half of them, while he apparently made no effort to obtain from Acton's son the other half of the correspondence, Simpson's answers. The

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from the Introduction to Lord Acton's *Essays on Church and State*, edited by Douglas Woodruff and to be published later this year by Hollis & Carter. The first section is omitted here and further excisions are denoted by asterisks.

letters he did use he edited, from kindly motives, softening expressions about Father Faber which would have wounded Oratorians then living, who had known and revered their founder, or about men whose children would have been hurt. But he seldom indicated what he had removed. For his long Introduction he had at his elbow Mr. Wetherell, the last survivor of the three or four men who had done the actual editorial work in the 'sixties. Wetherell was more interested in the story of the journals themselves than in Acton's part in them; so that Acton is only central in Gasquet's concluding five pages. Mr. Herbert Paul had not known—it was natural that he should not have known—this chapter of Catholic history, and almost everything about *The Rambler* in his Introduction is inaccurate, and the volume which Gasquet sponsored was necessary and useful. It was the only volume which presented from the side of the lay editors an unhappy story which kept cropping up as the standard lives of Wiseman and Manning, and then of Newman and Ullathorne, appeared. For it was a story of the lay apostolate cut short, a parallel chapter to that of Newman's efforts to bring Catholics to Oxford thirty years before they began to go there.

Following out the story, we can see how very unfortunate Acton and his associates were in setting out on a new kind of apologetic in the very years when Pope Pius IX and his advisers were entering on the last desperate decade of the temporal power. That was the fundamental explanation why the times were so unpropitious, but there were also local circumstances in England, and two in particular; that there was a new Hierarchy, at once more nervous and more authoritarian than it was to be after it had matured as an institution, and, secondly, the emergence of the narrow, masterful ecclesiastic who succeeded Wiseman and became Cardinal Manning. In Wiseman's last troubled years, these very years of Acton's journalism, Manning was close at the Cardinal's elbow and deep in his counsels, and clear in his own mind that any advantages that might have come from a better educated laity would be bought at too high a price.

In the Rome of Pius IX, Manning triumphed and until his death in 1892 the new fresh wind that blew from the Rome of Leo XIII did not penetrate into England. But in the 'fifties serious journalism was in the air of England. Wiseman himself had taken a leading part in founding THE DUBLIN REVIEW in 1836, two years after Acton's birth. Four years later a convert from the

Quakers, but with little of their pacific qualities, Frederick Lucas, had founded *The Tablet*. As the converts from Oxford came into the Church in the 'forties they found the pulpit closed to them but they had the possibilities of the Press. One such convert, Henry Wilberforce, had *The Weekly Register*, another, Frederick Capes, founded *The Rambler*. A fourth convert clergyman, Richard Simpson, came in to help Capes in 1856 and a fifth, Thomas Wetherell, to help Newman, when in 1859 Newman edited two issues of *The Rambler*.

Simpson was to become Acton's intimate friend until his death in 1876. He was fourteen years older, a serious and thorough scholar who wrote what has remained the standard life of Edmund Campion. He was a man of substantial private means, and when at the age of twenty-four he ceased to be Vicar of Mitcham and became a Catholic he could and did continue to be a student at leisure. He was a man of great independence of mind, with a certain Puckish spirit, and it was difficult for him and for Capes to understand either Rome or the restored Hierarchy. It was because they had been rebels inside the Church of England that they found themselves in the Catholic Church, no longer able to preach or minister since they were married (both Simpson and his wife were descendants of Cranmer's brother), and inclined to think that in the less august medium of journalism they were free to write very much what they fancied; and as their interests were theological they were constantly indulging in theological speculation, often rash, and often written in a way sure to irritate. This was exceedingly unfortunate for it meant that they imported into Catholic life something which alienated the sympathies of the great majority of their new co-religionists. This was equally true whether those co-religionists were old Catholics rejoicing in the new-found freedoms and larger air, uncritical and only conscious that after enduring so much misrepresentation from the Protestant tradition for so long, the days of silence or defensive apology were ending, or whether they were the Irish, coming in increasing numbers, and for the most part quite uninterested in thought, or literature, but if they did hear of it, quickly impatient with converts of a critical turn of mind and habit of outspoken speech.

Into this world Sir John Acton came when he was twenty-three, in 1857, and his early work in journalism dates from that year and appeared in *The Weekly Register*.<sup>1</sup> In the following year

<sup>1</sup> As early as 1855 Henry Wilberforce was in correspondence with him.

he became joint editor of *The Rambler*<sup>1</sup> together with Richard Simpson, who had already in his two years with the paper done as much or more than his editor Capes to cause episcopal doubts and misgivings about *The Rambler's* influence.

Acton came with very different and much wider ideas than he found. He was a European man, born at Naples and to die at Tegernsee in Bavaria, with as much German and Italian as English blood, and he had been more on the Continent than in England ever since he was sixteen. He knew German journalism and all its difficulties with civil and religious Authority at least as well as he knew English, and so he had acquired in his formative years in Munich with Döllinger strong ideas about religious journalism.

At that time Döllinger was a man of fifty. He had been ordained in the closing years of the Pontificate of Pius VII and he had caught a sight in the utterances of that long dispossessed Pope of the Church as she could be, standing on her own and not held in the suffocating embrace of any state, however Catholic. He had himself been born in the heavy time of 'Josephism', of the régime named after Maria Theresa's son, by which the Church was a branch of the public service, the Bishops higher-grade and the priests lower-grade civil servants. It was not natural to the Church, nor essential, nor useful. It was as accidental as the more dignified régime of the Middle Ages, when the Church had exercised, for lack of any one else to exercise them, all sorts of powers which were no necessary part of her divine mission and prerogatives. To subjects living after 1815, under Habsburgs and Wittelsbachs who still regarded the eighteenth-century order as normal and right, who expected to appoint the Bishops and order the clergy through them, and to supervise the intellectual life in their dominions, ultramontanism was a gospel of liberation and the promise of a freer and more fruitful day.

Döllinger had done his own foundational reading in Italian

<sup>1</sup> The circulations of these journals were all small even by nineteenth-century standards, from 500 to 3000 copies, and their finances always difficult. Editors who had not private means suffered from severe poverty, and the later years of both Capes and Wetherell were so burdened. There was always difficulty in paying contributors; although printing was at that time cheap, there was no advertising revenue. It is rather surprising that men with considerable incomes derived from land or capital investment, like Acton and Simpson, were so exceedingly cautious about using their money in establishing these journals properly, while the old Catholics, who at that time counted numerous wealthy landed families, many of them very zealous to spread the faith, were living in a world in which the press was undervalued and its finance a mystery.

sources before there were either German texts or German historians; he was in touch with a tradition of Italian scholarship whose glory had been Benedict XIV. His life was contemporary with the prodigious development of the German history school, of the search for original authorities and devotion to them; and he believed, and Acton with him, that the Church had everything to gain from the fullest acceptance of the new scientific history, that in proportion as the truth could be unearthed and recovered, and the past really known, while individuals and whole generations might have to be more stringently condemned on this score or on that, the nature of human life and the divine character and mission of the Church would be increasingly clear. But the essential thing was to show the scientific spirit, to sit down before fact like a little child, especially before the facts of history, the medium in which the Revelation was present and manifest.

For this it seemed that Catholic journalism in England could be carried on under quite exceptionally favourable conditions. Like Montalembert, for whom the Church in Ireland was so great an inspiration precisely because it was not established by nor bound up with the civil government, Döllinger saw the Catholics in England as peculiarly happily placed to strike this new note. No one then thought of the British Isles as other than one political community, and to any one looking at the English and Irish as one society, the Catholics although the minority were a considerable minority, one in five or six in a population of twenty-five million. It was a country of free inquiry, limited by massive Protestant prejudice, and a prejudice nourished and in a measure justified by the features of the Church which had been most in evidence in the Catholic Monarchies in the last centuries in which the Church had been organized as a subordinate part of the structure of absolutism. Acton's ambition was to produce periodicals which would be read by educated Englishmen and would show them that Catholic scholarship was quite as thorough and candid and fair as any of their own, and that often, indeed, it was better because freer from insular limitations. The educated Englishmen came away from Oxford and Cambridge much more closely versed in the history of the Mediterranean world before than after Christ. The English Universities were so little interested in the largest and greatest events on the mainland since the Incarnation that the whole subject of the Holy Roman Empire could, without any sense of incongruity, be set as a curious bypath, suitable as a sub-

ject for a Prize Essay, at Oxford in 1863, and the winning essay by James Bryce would then have the field to itself, for lack of interest, for another generation. The Catholic Professors in Munich had been preoccupied with their opponents, German Protestants and German Rationalists, and Acton brought this preoccupation with the non-Catholic world to his associates in England who had a smaller horizon and thought too much of the different groups among their co-religionists.

## II

Acton himself was not at all indifferent to what he called the political education of Catholics. At the outset of their association he wrote his ideas to Simpson, considering himself as particularly in charge of the political side of the paper, and quite clear what he wanted to do :

I think there is a philosophy of politics to be derived from Catholicism on the one hand and from the principles of our constitution on the other—a system as remote from the absolutism of one set of Catholics as from the doctrinaire constitutionalism of another set (*Le Correspondant*, etc.). I conceive it possible to appeal at once to the example and interest of the Church and to the true notion of the English constitution.

What these were, he came back to again and again, that the division and multiplicity of bodies was the secret of good government, believing that in proportion as this came to be understood, the existence and vitality of the Church would be valued instead of feared. He planned articles on Burke as a teacher for Catholics, the later Burke after 1792, and he proposed to explain to them that they owed emancipation neither to the Irish Catholics nor to the Whigs, and that 'we need no longer humiliate ourselves or eat dirt to obtain the support of the Liberal or Radical party'. He began with the intention of avoiding contention as far as might be, knowing that much he had to say would be new and unwelcome; but he was so little filled with either superiority or faction that at the outset he proposed a council for *The Rambler* on which every one distinguished for position and talent who could be reckoned a friend should be invited to sit; and he specially named Manning as, with Hope, one of two with whom he felt he would on most occasions agree.

He brought very high standards from Munich. Explaining why he did not take Father Faber seriously, he wrote to Simpson :

Now I went through a three-year course of this kind of study of theology—i.e. of the sources, genesis and growth of the doctrines of the Church—so that although I did not exhaust any subject and am therefore no authority on any question, yet I know very well the method on which it is necessary to proceed, and can at once detect a writer who even with immense reading of theologians is but a dilettante in theology. That's why I said that Newman's essay on St. Cyril, which on a minute point was original and progressive, was a bit of theology, which all the works of Faber, Morris, Ward, and Dalgairns will never be. It is the absence of scientific method and original learning in nearly all even of our best writers that makes it impossible for me to be interested in their writings.

So it was not really very surprising if before many months he was full of doubts about his suitability for the work and was telling Simpson that Simpson must be saying periodical writing was inconsistent with the kind of studies Acton had pursued and with 'my slow and pacific habits of thought'. 'I once imagined it would help to overcome my natural aversion to rapid and spider-like production. As to the use I might otherwise be to you I deceived myself from my ignorance of the real character of our public.'

This was just before he went back to Munich for three months at the beginning of the critical year 1859, and wrote to Simpson in terms which showed that whatever reservations he had made about his own gifts he had as keen a sense as ever of the importance of the work.

The task of raising the level of thought and learning among us is arduous enough to employ us all our lives. It is one in which approbation and popularity are no test of success and in which success is necessarily slow; it is one too in which it is worthwhile to lose nothing by one's own fault. You are the only English Catholic possessing the positive qualifications for conducting such a review as *The Rambler* strives to be. You only want a couple of dull fellows to take my place as advocate of the devil and to carp at everything you write. As to politics, I leave you as my legacy the request that you will read Burke's speeches from 1790 to 1795. They are the law and the prophets.

(This was the Burke of whom he had written earlier that in those last years all that was Protestant or partial or revolutionary of 1688 in his political views had disappeared and what remained was a purely Catholic view of political principles and of history.)

For the next three years Acton passed his time between Aldenham, his Shropshire home, London when Parliament was sitting,

and Munich. His mother died in 1860 and he found himself better off and embarked on great extensions of his library.

Mr. Gladstone, having read and been impressed by his article on American politics, began to take a growing interest in him. From Acton's side the admiration for Gladstone grew slowly. In 1860 he wrote of the Budget speech as 'a tame, straightforward affair': 'I rejoice at the confirmation it contains of my view that he is not inclined to democracy or class legislation, but tries to carry out true principles of economy,' and he was pre-eminently the political commentator on the situation at the moment at home and abroad, with personal contacts denied to Simpson. But his main interest, to which he returns with relish and relief, is scientific ecclesiastical history. He annotated Simpson's *Campion* chapter by chapter.

This historical work was often more easily undertaken in Munich than in England. To the end of his life this was true of him: the list of the hundred best books he drew up in his later years had more titles in German than in any other one language. His two chief German teachers were Dr. Döllinger and Professor Lasaulx. Dr. Döllinger died outside the Church, and Professor Lasaulx, Rector of the Munich University, had all his books placed on the Index in 1859. He made his submission before he died two years later. These were the years before Sadowa and the Hohenzollern Empire, years in which the struggle for more freedom of speculation in Germany was intimately linked with the struggle for more political constitutionalism.

In the essay on Ultramontanism [which is reproduced in *Essays on Church and State*], Acton describes this new spirit from beyond the mountains as intended to enlarge and liberate the energies of the Church.

He had been in Rome in 1857, and knew well how nervous and preoccupied the Government of Pius IX was in the presence of the advancing ambitions of the House of Savoy, with the England of Russell and Palmerston behind Cavour.

\* \* \*

### III

If such was the Rome of those decades, the English Hierarchy also had its particular reasons for nervousness. These were its first years as a hierarchy, and its members had a difficult task to keep

unity among a body of faithful of as highly different antecedents as could be imagined. They knew that for a long time the influential voice of Cardinal Acton in Rome had argued against any restoration of the English Hierarchy on the ground that it would delay instead of helping the spread of the faith. Cardinal Acton had said that the great powers of a Bishop would have to be entrusted to men who would, indeed, be good men, but who would be unequal to their responsibilities, would shelter nervously behind their prerogatives, and so would prove a drag on the growth of the Church in England. Wiseman, with Manning at his elbow, had to convince Rome that the English Hierarchy could be trusted to rise to its tasks.

Cardinal Wiseman was not by predisposition or character unfriendly to any of Acton's aims. He was a man of wide intellectual interests and he had had the immense satisfaction of knowing that an article of his in *THE DUBLIN REVIEW* on the Donatists had been responsible for a very important step forward in the intellectual process of Newman's conversion. He was fully alive to the danger to religion from the new scientific theories and had, with his marked virtuosity, himself given lectures on the relations between science and scripture. But he derived from Ireland and Spain before he came from Rome, and had grown up in the Mediterranean world where there was little conception of a free Press, least of all a free religious Press. At the beginning he thought it quite within his province to issue a direction that no Catholic journals were to treat of any subject calculated to divide Catholics.

These years, 1858 to 1864, were the last period of Wiseman's life. From 1860 his health declined rapidly, with attacks of angina. His worries and his health interacted. He was in continual conflict with his coadjutor, Dr. Errington, who tried to diminish the growing dependence of the Cardinal upon Manning; and Errington was, in the event, after lengthy investigations in Rome, removed.

Already, in 1856, when Simpson joined it, after eight years of publication, *The Rambler* was a source of anxiety to the Bishops, and among Catholics its tone was very generally disliked as un-Catholic: they felt it was the work of converts instructing, rather pontifically, their co-religionists, including ecclesiastical authorities, in a tone never suitable, but doubly out of place from men writing so soon after entering the Church. The atmosphere was already full of suspicion and recrimination when Acton appeared on the scene, bringing his own particular kind of superiority, the

superiority of the more closely informed. He was as keenly interested in ecclesiastical history as in any other branch of learning; it was religious ideas and institutions, not only Catholic, that had been the great subject matter of Lasaulx and Döllinger, and the displacement of scholastic theology their great ambition.

The ideas of the frontier between free and reserved topics with which Acton approached journalism are shown in the letters to Newman which begin when Acton is no more than twenty-four, in 1858. Newman, from Dublin, wanted Acton to enter his name for his Catholic University, which Acton agreed to do. Very soon, however, he is asking Newman to edit a review to be written by his Dublin Professors, and writes, 10 December, 1858:

The professors of Canon Law, of political science, of speculative philosophy, are surely in every respect as much fitted to publish their opinions and their researches as the professors of mathematics and chemistry, and they are justified in instructing the public through the press . . . I do not believe there is less certainty in those sciences than in others, and I am sure they are the most important. I should imagine, too, that the scientific treatment of these matters without party vehemence would be of great weight and value . . . we have been long afflicted with the *Dublin Review* and it has accustomed a large portion of our numbers to that intellectual lethargy which is displayed. On the other hand many are carried away by a superficial brilliancy to errors of thought and feeling which are still more dangerous. *The Rambler* would not be so outspoken and so ill-humoured if those things were not felt as disasters by most of those who read it. But a monthly, especially with such traditions, can do no more than excite discontent and a wish for something better . . . a large portion of Anglicans are very attentive to Catholic writings and there is a great deal to be done here and few Catholics know the importance of it.

Ten days later he writes again to Newman:

My wish and object was simply to obtain for the Catholic body the advantage of having its chief organ, and the chief director of its opinions, under your immediate influence . . . I have no difficulty in agreeing with that part of your letter which I construe into advice for myself. I shall never obtain in *The Rambler* any sort of real influence and the hurry and haste of writing monthly articles harasses and disgusts me. The things that I have accumulated in the course of my studies can find no place in it and whatever I write in a review of such a popular character seems pedantic.

To this Newman replied, on 31 December:

I certainly think *The Rambler* is in a false position and I have long thought so. If I recollect rightly it began as a literary work and

with the hope of raising the tone of Catholic literature. At one time it called itself a Journal of the Fine Arts. It generally had a tale in progress. It was properly a magazine. I think it has been a mistake to take up theology at all—and a double mistake to treat it after the fashion of a magazine—and a third mistake that laymen have done this. Then there is mistake the fourth, that *The Rambler* has attacked ecclesiastical authorities:

and Newman goes on to explain that where the Holy See has supported laymen against diocesans—Veuillot, Brownson—the laymen had gone all the way in support of the rights and claims of the Holy See. He concluded: 'It is quite clear to me that if *The Rambler* goes on in its present course, there will be some way or other found of bringing it to an end': and in a sentence which recalls the enthusiasm with which Newman had read Wellington's dispatches which had made him burn to be a soldier, he goes on:

*The Rambler* should drop theology, should adopt the policy of Wellington in the Lines of Torres Vedras, become literary, attack the Protestants from time to time. The *Christian Remembrancer* and *Guardian* have gone on with much éclat without any principles at all. How have they gone on? Simply by attacking their opponents.

To this idea of dropping theology, not only Acton but Simpson agreed. The proposal for a quarterly under Newman did not advance, although Acton offered twenty pounds a year for three years towards it. In January 1859 he described himself as flattered and rather overwhelmed at the suggestion Newman made that they should collaborate, and wrote: 'I am too conscious of the questionable character of the reputation I have unfortunately acquired to allow my name to be publicly connected just now with anything in which I am deeply interested,' and professed himself anxious to disappear temporarily from the scene, only appearing occasionally in print.

At the same time, at the beginning of 1859, Newman was writing to Simpson that the Bishops had met about *The Rambler*.

My own notion is that they had instructions from Rome to do so. It pains me exceedingly to entertain the very idea of *The Rambler*, which has done so much for us, and which is so influential, being censured from an authority—and the scandal would be considerable. I don't know what the Bishops could do, if they exerted their power to the utmost, but I suppose they could forbid their clergy to read it. That they will not be satisfied without doing a great deal, and that at once, is quite clear.

On the day Newman wrote that, 16 February, Bishop Ullathorne wrote to Newman that he had met Wiseman, Grant (Bishop of Southwark), Errington and

after our business, we talked about *The Rambler*, and were unanimous that something must be done. The point is to act with as much quietness and considerateness as the case admits of. I mentioned my conversation with you and your kind offer to write to the Editor, Sir John Acton. Cardinal Wiseman said it was like you, and that everybody was always safe with you. It is our opinion that nothing short of Mr. Simpson's retiring from the editorship will satisfy, as he plainly cannot judge what is and what is not sound in language.

It was made very plain that *The Rambler* would have to be mentioned in Pastoral Letters if Simpson did not retire at once.

Simpson went at once to see Newman, and said the March *Rambler* was printed all but six pages, and added: 'I yield to their threats, but only provisionally and on conditions of my being able to find another editor and the proprietors being able to carry on the magazine in the same or different form.' The Bishops did not consider themselves bound by these stipulations between Newman and Simpson, and Newman felt aggrieved, 'had not the experience of many years made me tire of indignation and complaint'. Negotiation was at an end between Simpson and the Hierarchy, but the proprietors offered the editorship to Newman, and both Acton and Simpson said they would work for him as heartily as for themselves. For a moment it looked as though Newman might combine *The Rambler* with his Dublin quarterly *Atlantis*, and Simpson thought exultantly that this combination would give THE DUBLIN the *coup de grâce*: 'THE DUBLIN is a gone coon.' He saw the hand of the rival editor of THE DUBLIN behind all the difficulties made for *The Rambler*, and wrote to Newman on 7 March: 'I cannot help feeling a satisfaction that this struggle, which has been all along one of rival editors, should end not in changing *The Rambler* alone, but in multiplying the difficulties of its rival also.'

This last sentiment did not elicit any response from Newman, who wrote back: 'That I entertain the idea at all arises, first, from my gratitude to you for the confidence you have placed in me, and, secondly, from a real sense of the value of *The Rambler* as a periodical, as I have said to you already.' But he added pointedly that he had no wish to 'rival or embarrass THE DUBLIN'.

Newman's editorship was warmly welcomed in the other camp. W. G. Ward wrote, also on 7 March, that no one wrote for THE DUBLIN except with the greatest distaste and sacrificed themselves out of detestation of *Rambler* principles. Now these were ended, every one would prefer to write for Newman. Ward, for all his extreme views on authority, was very anxious to keep Cardinal Wiseman out of *The Rambler*. He had at that time no idea of himself editing anything. 'I am occupied with matters which interest me extremely; and for my own part would not care to walk across the room, if by merely doing so I could turn out a first-rate Quarterly.'

But what made others happy alarmed Wiseman, who had a double affection for THE DUBLIN, as both his child and his property, for not only had he started it, he still controlled it as proprietor. He wrote to Newman to express his dismay, since a *Rambler* edited by Newman 'would leave no chance for a second periodical'.

Newman took over *The Rambler* in March 1859, as the only way to preserve it as a property. To keep faith with the Bishops he had to relegate Simpson and Acton to the far background. He brought in Wetherell as sub-editor, after a first attempt to secure another convert, Thompson (the father of Alice Meynell and Elizabeth Butler).

Newman's editorship, however, was brief and unhappy. By May, after seeing his first number, the Bishops were asking him to give it up. He wrote to Simpson on 25 May: 'The Bishop of Birmingham called on me today and said that he wished me to give up the editorship of *The Rambler* after July. I have promised to do so . . . I believe the Bishops' wish is solely founded on the contents of the May number.'

#### IV

What the Bishops disliked in Newman's first issue came in the section Home Affairs, on the Bishops' attitude towards the Royal Commission then sitting on the poor-law schools. The episcopal attitude was that here was a subject obviously in their jurisdiction, and any criticism was considered interference. Newman replied that he had assumed that the Bishops would desire to know the opinion of the laity on subjects in which, like education,

the laity were particularly concerned. Then he wrote the fateful sentence :

If even in the preparation of a dogmatic definition the faithful are consulted, as lately in the instance of the Immaculate Conception, it is at least as natural to anticipate such an act of kind feeling and sympathy in the great practical questions, out of the condescension which belongs to those who are 'forma facti gregis ex animo'. If our words or tone were disrespectful, we deeply grieve and apologize for such a fault; but surely we are not disrespectful in thinking and having thought that the Bishops would like to know the sentiments of an influential portion of the laity before they took any step which perhaps they could not recall,

and went on to say, 'We are too fully convinced of the misery of any division between the rulers of the Church and the educated laity' to do anything to bring about 'so dire a calamity'. This failed to mollify, and the precipitate and unfortunate decision was taken by the Bishops thus to terminate Newman's editorship, but he accepted it without protest—

It is impossible with the principles and feelings on which I have acted all through life, that I could have acted otherwise. I never have resisted and never can resist the voice of a lawful superior, speaking in his own province.

Simpson wrote back suggesting that Acton should be editor and should make it primarily political—

The thing now becomes a persecution and I am resolved to take the strongest measures for the preservation of my property and my rights, whatever may be the consequences. Will you allow me to tell Ward of the steps taken by the Bishops with the same reservation of secrecy as you have made with Thompson?

But Newman replied that Ward was a 'prodigious blab'.

In July, after producing his second and last number, which contained 'On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine', Newman wrote to Wetherell, 'I am not editor in any sense', for he had very soon found he could not do it, and was extremely glad that Acton was prepared to take it over.

When Wetherell asked for more guidance, Newman wrote back, in August, 'You will be able to give your confidence to Sir John Acton, the editor. I am sure he wishes to keep clear of what is likely to give offence to Catholics and has no wish to make *The*

*Rambler* the organ of a party.' Newman said afterwards that his own editorship, brief as it was, had secured Simpson and Acton three years more, and that by keeping Simpson from being editor again he had kept faith with the Bishops.

Acton thus emerged, with Simpson at his side, and in effect the interposition of Newman had had the effect of leaving the position at the end of 1859 very much what it had been at the beginning, except that Newman's name was a little less shining in the eyes of the Bishops and at Rome. 'Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine' brought energetic remonstrance from Cardinal Barnato of Propaganda Fide to the English Hierarchy.

Newman wrote to Acton (20 June, 1860) saying:<sup>1</sup>

My dear Sir John,

It has always been a great perplexity to me who is to be the editor of *The Rambler*. I have thought of it again and again without any success. For myself the Bishop has hindered it and that is an end of it. If I said, on relinquishing the editorship, that I would still give my name to it, it was only under certain conditions, conditions made necessary by my arrangements with the Bishop. The principal of these was that I should only be one of several whose names would be more authoritative than my own—such as Father de Buck, F. Gratty, or l'Abbé Marat and Dr. Döllinger. Considering both my responsibilities at the Oratory, and the circumstance of my being a convert, I could not act otherwise. As it was I had got into trouble by taking on myself *The Rambler as I found it*, without retracting anything that it had said. I took up and defended as my own its cause in the education question. I wrote an article on the right of the laity to be consulted, and as you know I thereby incurred a good deal of odium. It was this defence of the rights of the laity even in my May No. which was the chief cause of my Bishop's dissatisfaction with me. So much did my July No. increase this feeling that when I saw you about February last I told you that quite independent of anything in the recent Nos. of *The Rambler* I feared I should not be able to contribute anything more. And the chief condition was that there should be a responsible editor, which it was quite plain *you* could not be. I have the greatest opinion of Simpson as an able and honest man, and sincere gratitude for the way in which he has ever spoken of myself, but I deliberately thought him unfitted for the office of conductor of a work which was necessarily exposed to such jealous criticism.

Newman then explained that he withdrew altogether because he became convinced that Simpson was in fact the editor rather

<sup>1</sup> Printed as an appendix to Ward's *Newman*, Vol. II, p. 636.

than Acton. Simpson was always in England, while Acton was as likely to be on the Continent as not.

Acton felt this withdrawal very much; it had come as a great and unanticipated shock, and he had nearly denied it. He visited Newman to ask whether he too should give up, or should go on. He wrote in June 1860:

I beg of you, remembering the difficulties you encountered, to consider my position, in the midst of a hostile and illiterate episcopate, an ignorant clergy, a prejudiced and divided laity, with the cliques at Brompton, York Place, Ushaw, always on the watch, obliged to sit in judgment on the theology of the men you selected to be our patrons, deserted by the assistant whom you obtained for me, with no auxiliary or adviser but Simpson. And this after you had left us, with the opposition of *The Dublin Review*, of *The Tablet* in politics, and with the time-serving criticisms even of the paper which has owed me the greatest services<sup>1</sup>—at a time when the greatest and most difficult questions agitate the country and the Church.

He had a variety of reasons for not wanting to go on. He was expanding his library, and he wrote, 9 June, 1861, to Newman:

My old master Lasaulx, one of the greatest German scholars, died the other day after expressing a wish that his library should not be sold by auction, but offered first of all to me, and I have bought it, both for his sake and for the excellent books. It will greatly add to the value and to the confusion of my library which I continue to hope will some day tempt you over to Aldenham . . . My books have an irresistible attraction for me which makes me miserable in London. In the House I find I am isolated and without hopes of obtaining any influence for my principles. I am sure I can do better in another sphere.

But he was really very anxious to go on.

An important letter to Newman, 2 July, 1861, shows how he was unprepared for Newman's relative strictness of interpretation of the importance of ecclesiastical decrees.

I am so much startled by your letter that you must not consider this an answer to it. There is something in your view of the importance belonging to decrees of authority for which I was not at all prepared, and which I must take time to consider. My own notion was that having excluded theology from *The Rambler*, nothing remained over which the ecclesiastical power possessed jurisdiction. In political life we should not be deterred, I suppose, by the threat

<sup>1</sup> Presumably the *Weekly Register*.

or even the fear of excommunication from doing what we should have deemed our duty if no such consideration had presented itself, and I do not see how I am in a different position as editor and as M.P. I put aside, of course, the material point of view that it is very probable we should lose nearly all subscribers and contributors. I do not think I have been in the habit of exaggerating the merits or the value of *The Rambler*. I do not like the office of Editor, and I do not see that it has been doing much good. Father St. John who discussed the question with me last year can bear witness that this was my opinion then. But if we do no great good by our views, we do some, I think, and especially now, by the spectacle of our independence. Perhaps it is because I am in the midst of Protestant society that I feel more strongly how bad the effect would be on them, if it should appear that the only organ among English Catholics of opinions with which it is possible for reasonable Protestants to sympathize was silenced by authority. Nor does it seem to me to the advantage of the rulers of the Church that, having imposed silence, they should call it submission and agreement.

On this letter Newman noted :

I wrote a very strong answer to this—said I only differed with him on the fact. I thought *The Rambler* had trespassed on ground under the direct jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority:

- (1) In the controversy about seminaries which had annoyed me very much.
- (2) In flinging out, without natural course of the argument or necessity, against S. Pius V.
- (3) In flinging out against the Sacred Congregation as impeding them in a review of Ward's philosophy.

That I thought Simpson incorrigible, that I 'despaired' of him. That a good sum of the public would be with the ecclesiastical authority if it came down upon *The Rambler*. I said that no good could come of a publication with which Simpson was connected.

Acton answered this mildly on 8 July. But about Pius V he asked :

Has the Church a right to censure me because I say of a canonized saint that on some occasion he committed an error of judgment, or even a mortal sin? Their biographies are full of such things—at least all the older lives. Sanctity really does not mean perfection, nor absolute wisdom; and in this case not the holiness but the wisdom of the saint was impugned.

He went on :

I have never been very zealous for particular views, but I care above almost everything for one or two principles or general

opinions. I cannot bear that Protestants should say the Church cannot be reconciled with the truths or precepts of science, or that Catholics should fear the legitimate and natural progress of the scientific spirit. These two errors seem to me almost identical and if one is more dangerous than the other, I think it is the last, and that it comes more naturally to me to be zealous against the Catholic mistake than against the Protestant. But the weapon against both is the same, the encouragement of the true scientific spirit and disinterested love of truth. I have nowhere seen this principle sincerely adopted on the continent by any Catholic periodical, or by any group of Catholics, and I really think it a merit of *The Rambler*, not that it does this successfully, but that it sees it and attempts to practise it. Yet I cannot conceive how such a cause can be pursued without collision with Rome, or how it can avoid being beset with difficulties in such a society as ours. I am sure I can conscientiously say I have not striven to give offence, or to insult what is venerable, but I believe I cannot always avoid the appearance of it. Do not these principles suffice to explain our position and attitude without the hypothesis of errors and failure in the pursuit of them? I always feel that I am deliberately and systematically further removed from the prevailing sentiments of good and serious Catholics than Simpson is with all his 'impudence'.

This letter ended with a comment on the irony in the contrast between Newman's real and supposed attitude:

Your imputed solidarity with *The Rambler* is very distressing when I consider how much my mind has been troubled with the idea of your disagreement and disapprobation. Would it were otherwise.

At the same time Manning, speaking for Cardinal Wiseman, visited Acton, to say a letter had come from Cardinal Antonelli, Secretary of State, with the Pope's knowledge, connecting the support given to the Government by Catholic members with things that had appeared in *The Rambler*. Acton wrote after this interview, telling Newman:

The upshot was that a censure was impending from Rome, that he was anxious I should disengage myself from *The Rambler* in time to escape it and should give him a promise that whatever the wish of the Holy Father might be should also be mine. Then he said *The Rambler* had appeared to him of late less Catholic in spirit and tendency, and was doing harm and that it was highly desirable to put an end to it altogether. The points of difference were numerous enough, both as to history and metaphysics, but, from his own statements as to my article on the Roman question not being up to

the mark and Anglican in tone, and from the connection I perceived in the minds of people in Rome between *The Rambler* and support given to ministers in Parliament, it is obvious that the present political question is the decisive cause.

The rescript duly came from Rome and the Bishop of Shrewsbury told Acton about it 'as a very solemn thing'. So it was for a combination of reasons that in 1861 the two-monthly *Rambler* gave place to a new quarterly, called *The Home and Foreign Review* (published at 6s. by Williams and Norgate). In April 1862 Acton wrote to Newman:

The violence of feeling in the Curia seems to have reached a height. You would be greatly shocked to hear of the mode in which—I greatly fear with the concurrence of Manning—they have lately attempted to do me a private injury, for the purpose of serving their public ends.

Wiseman was hostile to any continuation, and Newman warned Acton in October that the two *Letters to the Clergy* on *The Rambler* published by Bishop Ullathorne represented the attitude of more than three-quarters of the Hierarchy, and that Propaganda would confirm it. He added: 'It does seem to me to be the voice of the Church.' Acton answered (31 October, 1862) that he 'would never dream of receiving a canonical decision by a Bishop with anything but the most entire respect, and if I could have any temptation or inclination to protest and to answer, or to defend myself, it would be sentenced by your example, even if I had not received your advice.' Newman advised Acton to give twenty years to the production of a great work.

But Acton was determined to go on, and Newman's advice in this case was that the editors should do some hard work for the Church and earn the right to be heard. The man who was so soon to write his own *Apologia* continued:

There is no position, there are no circumstances in which there is not the right thing to do, if we have the skill to find it out. There is no move on the part of others towards us, but leaves room for a true counter-move on our part against them. There is no such thing as a cheque-mate [sic] except through our own fault. I allow it is difficult to find it, and perhaps when we see it at length, it is too late to avail ourselves of it. I can fancy a contra-statement to the Cardinal, which for its naturalness and straight-forwardness would win all candid minds. It is a great opportunity for a simple, manly, eloquent avowal of what you aim at.

He was not very well satisfied with the reply which Wetherell wrote and sent to him in October, and wished it had 'more definiteness and more warmth: definiteness to satisfy and warmth to win.'

And in that same October he was very much put out by Acton's article on Döllinger's historical work, and wrote to Monsell that he could not talk of the other articles. 'I have a life-long disgust at speculations, as opposed to carefully argued theories or doctrines.'

At this time Newman's continuing connexion with *The Rambler* and its editors caused rumours that his newly founded Oratory School would be suppressed because the Oratorians were behind *The Home and Foreign Review*. Those who spread such rumours were out of date. Wiseman, as Newman noted twenty years later, 'thought I had recanted' and wanted to seal the matter by a reconciliation with W. G. Ward, editing THE DUBLIN, for which Newman should write. Ward himself wrote to Newman saying, 'Your present view of *The Home and Foreign Review* is to me the happiest tidings I have had for many a long day.' And Newman, while declining to write in THE DUBLIN, said he was glad that Ward no longer entertained the 'vague deep suspicions' he had harboured for eight years.

Newman's friend Monsell was writing (7 November, 1862):

I am afraid if Acton does not change, not his principles but his tone, he will be set aside by Catholics, and the resuscitated *Dublin*, which under Ward will be, I presume, a sort of echo of the *Univers*, will be the only acknowledged Catholic organ. I wrote to Acton to suggest a Council of Direction, such as the *Correspondant* is managed by, and the appointment of a theologian to revise articles on subjects such as Reason and Faith. He is so sensitive that I could not say what I wished to him about the affectation of superiority and the lecturing, as if from an eminence, of Bishops and priests. He does not see his way to any change. I look on the success of a Review on his principles as a matter of the deepest interest to us all. I have been much among the English Catholics in the last month, and they are so furious against the *Home and Foreign* that it is useless to argue with them about it . . . . Perhaps my knowledge of the terrible evil caused by the *Univers* in France makes me realize more than most Englishmen can do the terrible evils that will follow from an ultra review being recognized as our only organ. Yet this must follow the repudiation by the Catholic body, priests, laymen of the *Home and Foreign*.

## V

The letters which Bishop Ullathorne printed and circulated, under the names a *First*, and a *Second, Letter to his clergy*, set out some of the objectionable propositions he found in the *Review*, as, for example, that 'in the natural point of view Adam is simply the highest link in the animal series; he was not a civilized man. The supernatural gift ruled this chaos of passions,' and when he fell, 'he was allowed to lapse into the animal condition', and, said Ullathorne, 'words like religion, faith, morals, ethics, phenomena, forces, are used in a strange sense, drawn from the vocabularies of the philosophers and pantheist writers of Germany.' In another field, he quoted :

Political science can place the liberty of the Church on principles so certain and unfailing that intelligent and disinterested Protestants will accept them; and in every branch of learning with which religion is in any way connected the progressive discovery of truth will strengthen faith by promoting knowledge and correcting opinion, while it destroys prejudices and superstitions by dissipating the errors on which they are founded.

Although Simpson wrote an answer to the first letter invoking the authority of Cardinal Perrone for his account of Original Sin, between the two letters Dr. Frohschammer's excommunication took place. The critical year was, however, 1863, and the decisive event the Munich Congress. This was convened by Döllinger, the Church historian Alzog, and Abbot Kunsburg, and met at the end of September; its purpose was the better intellectual defence of the Church against the spreading rationalism, and the promotion of unity and concord among Catholic thinkers. It was a distinguished gathering of nearly a hundred Professors and Divines, mainly German and Austrian, and to them Döllinger as President delivered an address on the importance of breaking away from the cramping discipline of Scholastic theology. In its general sense the address was a demand for a much more drastic break with the intellectual past, a conception of development which distinguished sharply between the little that was dogma and all the elaboration and encrustation that had accompanied dogma. It was an address which called for exact interpretation, for it could be interpreted in a perfectly orthodox way or used as a justification and starting-point for modernism. It was almost

immediately corrected by a Brief from Rome in December, excluding the more extreme interpretation by reminding the faithful that ecclesiastical discipline and authority and tradition all have their rights as well as scientific inquiry. This Brief was a great disappointment to Acton, as to Döllinger, and decided Acton to stop *The Home and Foreign Review* early in 1864, in view of the unpropitious atmosphere in the Church.

Acton told the story to Newman in March.

I have to give you the important news of the suppression of *The Home and Foreign Review*. The Pope has issued a Rescript to the Archbishop of Munich on the late conference in which he virtually approves the tone and purpose, but adds several propositions on the submission due to the Congregation (by which the Index is meant) of the authority belonging to received opinions in the schools, and to the *Vetus Schola* which are directly and flagrantly opposed to the principles of the Review . . . I have determined not to risk a censure, but to take the significant warning of the document and put an end to the Review after the appearance of the next number. In an article on *Frohschammer* I shall find means of giving a full and intelligible explanation of my motives, which will be as satisfactory as it can be made without in any way renouncing any of our principles. I shall sign this paper in order to make the act and the declaration entirely my own.

Under the heading 'Conflicts with Rome' he wrote a general survey which remains a guide to his own thought and an explanation of how he could combine trenchant condemnation, not merely of individuals in history, but whole movements like the Ultramontanism of his own time. He wrote:

There are few faults or errors imputed to Catholicism which individual Catholics have not committed or held, and the instances on which these particular accusations have been founded have sometimes been supplied by the axe of authority itself. Dishonest controversy loves to confound the personal with the spiritual element in the Church, to ignore the distinction between the sinful agents and the divine institution, and this confusion makes it easy to deny what would otherwise be too easy to question, that knowledge has a freedom in the Catholic Church which you will find in no other religion, though there, as elsewhere, freedom degenerates unless it has to struggle in its own defence.

He went on to trace the tragedy of Lamennais, 'whose exaggeration of the infallibility of the Pope proved fatal to his religious faith'. He went on to argue that the true interest of the Church

was to be served by cherishing both political and intellectual liberty.

Public law may make it imperative to overthrow a Catholic monarch like James II, or to uphold a Protestant monarch like the King of Prussia. The demonstrations of science may oblige us to believe that the earth revolves round the sun, or that the donation of Constantine is spurious. The apparent interests of religion have much to say against all this, but religion itself prevents those considerations from prevailing,

and then he continued the argument that the interests of the Church are not necessarily identical with those of the ecclesiastical Government, and that all Governments like to leave the extent of their powers vague and indefinite while their subjects want them to be precise. He wrote of the Index, that it would have been immediately inadequate as a way of keeping the knowledge of ecclesiastical history from the faithful if all history had not been regarded as the ammunition of controversy, until the introduction of the scientific spirit into history began in the German universities, where Catholics, Lutherans, and Rationalists all found a common interest in subordinating their passions to scientific objectivity.

This led him to discuss the case of Dr. Frohschammer, who incurred excommunication for writings on theories of pre-existence and against the doctrine that each soul is created directly by Almighty God, a personal history which threw into relief all the conflict between the two traditions of the German universities and the Roman Curia. Acton considered that a man like Dr. Frohschammer when censured

could in the first place yield an external submission either for the sake of discipline or because his conviction is too weak to support him against the weight of authority, but if the question at issue is more important than the preservation of peace, and if his conviction is strong, he inquires whether the authority that condemns him utters the voice of the Church. If he finds that it does he yields to it or ceases to profess the faith of Catholics; if he finds that it does not, that it is only the voice of authority, he owes it to his conscience and to the supreme claims of truth to remain constant to that which he believes in spite of opposition. No authority has power to impose error, and if it resists the truth, the truth must be upheld until it is admitted.

This is not very conciliatory either in thought or language, even though it was followed by a full account of the extensive

errors into which Dr. Frohschammer fell in his attempts to justify himself. Acton condemned Dr. Frohschammer, saying:

When he found himself censured unjustly as he thought by the Holy See, it should have been enough for him to believe in his conscience that he was in agreement with the true faith of the Church. He would not then have proceeded to consider the whole Church affected with the liability to err from which her rulers are not exempt, or to degrade the fundamental truths of Christianity to the level of mere school opinions.

Frohschammer's attitude had been a main reason for the brief of Pius IX to the Archbishop of Munich, laying down that it is wrong, though not heretical, to reject the theological opinions or decisions of Roman Congregations. This document could be reconciled with the habitual language of *The Home and Foreign Review*, which, Acton said,

has always maintained in common with all Catholics that if the one Church has an organ it is through that organ that she must speak, that her knowledge is not limited to the precise sphere of her infallibility, and that opinions which she has long tolerated or approved and has for centuries found compatible with the secular as well as the religious knowledge of the age cannot be lightly supplanted by new hypotheses of scientific men which have not yet had time to prove their consistency with dogmatic truth.

But having said so much, he rejected any such plausible accommodation and concluded that 'it is therefore, not only more respectful to the Holy See, but more serviceable to the principles of the Review itself, and more in accordance with the spirit in which it has been conducted, to interpret the words of the Pope as they were really meant'.

He faced the divergence, seeing on the one hand scientific progress as beneficial to the Church, while it must inevitably be opposed by the guardians of traditional opinion, to whom as such no share in it belongs, and who by their own acts and those of their predecessors are committed to views which it menaces or destroys. A distinction between dogma and opinion, which *The Home and Foreign Review* existed to develop and emphasize, was being diminished intentionally by the Holy See, and the review would therefore find itself faced with the alternative of giving continual and reiterated offence to authority or of abandoning the essential purpose, and even if it were successful it would do no good, since the Holy See is the organ, the mouth, the head of the

Church, and its strength consists in its agreement with the general convictions of the faithful.

The ecclesiastical Government based on the public opinion of the Church and acting through it cannot separate itself from the mass of the faithful and keep pace with the progress of the instructed minority. It follows slowly and warily and sometimes begins by resisting and denouncing what in the end it thoroughly adopts. Hence a direct controversy with Rome holds out the prospect of great evils, and at the best a barren and unprofitable victory.

He relied upon books, upon graver scientific literature to be the agent of change. He concluded that the Review would cease, 'since it could not deny its principles nor flout authority. The principles have not ceased to be true, nor the authority to be legitimate, because the two are in contradiction'; and he concluded:

I will sacrifice the existence of the Review to the defence of its principles, in order that I may combine the obedience that is due to legitimate ecclesiastical authority with an equally conscientious maintenance of the rightful and necessary liberty of thought.

And he took leave of his readers with the thought that

from the beginning of the Church it has been the law of her nature that the truths which prove themselves the legitimate fruits of her doctrine have had to make their slow way upwards through a phalanx of hostile habits and traditions, and to be rescued not only from open enemies but also from friendly hands that are not worthy to defend them,

and on that humble note he closed, looking to a development of Catholic learning too powerful to be arrested or repressed, and relegating *The Home and Foreign Review* to history as but a partial and temporary embodiment of an imperishable idea.

So closed the experiment of six years, a period long enough to produce writings, many of which have been found to retain interest and importance a century later, and long enough to show what a great work might have been done in England if the time had been more propitious, the preoccupations, traditions, and temper dominant at Rome different, and the spirit and temper of Newman, rather than of Manning, uppermost in the councils of the English Bishops. The sudden appearance in their midst of a young man so phenomenally gifted, so ardent and by nature so little provocative, was something the English Catholic body could not have anticipated, and unhappily could not use.



# THE ROYAL DRAMA OF STRINDBERG

By BÉLA MENCZER

THE secret of Strindberg lies in a paraphrase of a famous dictum of his contemporary Oscar Wilde, who otherwise represents the most complete contrast to Strindberg both as a man and an artist in the gallery of his generation. The great Swede gave his tragic genius to his life, and to his art he gave only his dramatic talent. Superficially at least it is the talent and the technical mastery of Strindberg which strikes the spectator, as is often the case when a truly tragic genius is judged by his fellow men in their professional capacity. Whenever he is performed, on the stage or the radio, or—as lately—on the films, the critics point unanimously to his perfect technique of excitement, and to his gift for dramatic concentration, which needs three or four characters only on the stage, and often enough only two. Strindberg was himself conscious of this skill, to the extent of allowing himself every now and then an unparalleled *tour de force*. In one of his plays—clumsily called *The Stronger* in the English translation, whereas *The Winner* would have been more suitable—the action lasts one hour in the evening, just as it would have done in real life, during which the story of three lives is told: that of an absent man and of two women present, one of whom however is silent during the whole play, merely shrugging her shoulders or commenting on the other woman's attempt at a dialogue by other gestures of contempt or cynical indifference. His keen sense of symbols helped him in this almost sporting passion for dramatic concentration. A slight detail concerning a person's dress in the stage directions is enough to indicate a character who will live and die within an hour or even less—before our very eyes—sometimes less even than this. He would set his action in a Paris café, as in the play just quoted, with the feminine woman drinking a cup of hot chocolate (out of which would grow, as a dramatic surprise, a cold, calculated and deliberate killing by sweetened poison) and the masculine woman

drinking an ice cold glass of beer (which, in the subsequent dramatic surprise, discloses a hot, hidden and subtle erotic passion). Strindberg thrilled his public and amused himself by such deliberate virtuosity, the grim touch of the dialogue hardly hiding the fact that he is joking in his own way, which is after all the right of an essentially tragic mind. It is more misleading when he deprecates the whole of dramatic art and calls the drama *Biblia Pauperum*, a literature in pictures for those who cannot read, and when he considers his best work to be the autobiographical books, *The Son of a Maid*, *The Confessions of a Fool*, *Inferno* and *Solitude*.

Autobiography is the main element in Strindberg's art. Episodes of a sad childhood, his unfortunate experience of the other sex, his temporary obsession with science, his later and longer obsession with theosophy and Hindoo mystics—all recur in allusions and much of it became the material for characters in his dramas and novels. In the century which began with the Romantic discovery of the Great Ego, and especially in those countries of Germanic culture, there is hardly a more outstandingly egocentric case than that of the great Nordic dramatist. That he suffered from a real persecution mania, that he suspected calculated offence and almost criminal schemes behind the friendliest and kindest intentions, that he was the most difficult man possible in social intercourse, we know. According to a full volume of 'Confessions', he was on the brink of madness; he praised himself for having come to many of Nietzsche's thoughts before even hearing of the name of Nietzsche, and he was indeed little removed from the end of Nietzsche's road. Yet from such a persistent and often morbid egocentrism he reached the most surprising heights, far above his own personality. Other writers have taken up causes and amidst the tumult they made over them we know they were really championing themselves. Strindberg spoke of himself, and treated all the causes of his time, all the 'movements' of the masses in his century, and all the ideas moving his era, with equal contempt, yet while virtually excluding all other subjects than himself from his preoccupations, he constantly moved towards objective truth in its highest form, that of spiritual truth. The essence of tragedy is surprise. Tragedy was born in Greece but Christianity made it complete. The supreme tragedy, greater than any the Greeks ever invented, was the Word made Flesh, the appearance of a God born, not to rule and to be a master over the earth, but to serve men and die for them. The poetic genius is tragic when it goes its

ways in directions chosen by itself, in order to arrive at something unseen, unexpected and unsuspected at the beginning, to arrive at some end for the sake of which all that it treasured throughout the journey had to be lost and sacrificed. It is in this sense that Strindberg's life and art was a tragedy. Everything in it led to an unexpected result. When he was most lost in himself, he found God behind the Ego. When he worked on chemistry and physics he found magic and mystery. When he studied, with the keen curiosity of the dramatist, ambition, jealousy and sanguinary crime he found 'The Conscious Will in History', divine guidance in human affairs, and he even found true human greatness in the royal figures of Sweden, who attracted his imagination and his curiosity. He applied his mind and his heart to the adventure of anarchy and disorder and, humanly speaking, he enjoyed the adventure. By this means, he reached humility and a sense of order, almost the sense of authority, and his final confession, his vision of *Deus fortior me* (which had been a first premise for Dante for example) was his conclusion. When the *Titanic* sank in the spring of 1912, he rose from his deathbed to sing hymns at the piano—the eternal dramatist in him finding right up to the last a great scene to play with a musical accompaniment. Finally, to take him from his best-known aspect, Strindberg, conscious of masculine superiority, explores the disorder and anarchy caused by woman's sin, and ultimately finds her in her proper place (in his Reformation dramas)—Woman in defence of obedience and virtue, strong in her defence of the old religion.

The approach to Strindberg's thought is necessarily difficult. In the first place, he himself protests, sometimes violently, that no philosophy underlies his art. 'I am a dramatist,' he writes to his German translator and interpreter Emil Schering, 'and have no opinions. I am on the side of my characters when I make them speak, and I contradict them as soon as I make their opponents speak.' Then again, in *Historical Miniatures*, he lets Voltaire in old age—an unpleasant spokesman for anyone—speak in defence of the ageing Strindberg, who is frightened of his interpreters and biographers: 'Never mind what sort of a man I was! Let pious old women complain about me and the townsfolk gossip and the Jesuits censure me. That old ass that I was is nobody's business; all that matters is what I wrote.'

Notwithstanding all these attempts to bar the road to his inner

self, Strindberg delivered the key to his personality through his art, rather than the key to his art through his personality. His self-identification with the characters he created, temporary as it may be, already indicates that he followed Balzac's rule of a double life. His was, indeed, more than a double life, it was a manifold one. He was not satisfied with a single covering pose to disguise his inner self, as Balzac did with his pose of sumptuousness, Chateaubriand with his melancholy chivalry, and Stendhal with his pose of a cool, scientific curiosity about human nature. Unlike other artists of his century, Strindberg did not present one personality to public view and conceal a contrasting one in his inner self. With the true consistency of the dramatic and tragic genius, he pursued all the destinies he imagined to their bitter end. The volumes of autobiography tell of a brain which was always at work. He was first of all a humanist, devoted to studies of antiquity much in the taste of that sixteenth century in which he found so many of his characters and plots. He was a positive scientific mind, a queer mystic and theosophist. Then again he was a serious historian and archeologist, honoured for his research work on the Visigoth invasions of Roman Spain and Gaul by the King of Sweden, the Spanish Academy and the Institut de France. Like another child of the North, Erasmus of Rotterdam, who like him was tainted at birth, Strindberg was curious about everything, and behind this universal curiosity there was the desire for power, just as in Goethe's *Faust*, whose influence a mind of Germanic culture could hardly escape in his century.

And now comes the main dramatic surprise in this tragic character. He sought power through a demonic urge to possess knowledge; he attained to knowledge and to the truth about power, to a moral doctrine concerning power which he had not suspected at the beginning, and which seems to be contradicted by much that he wrote before and allowed his characters to say. Power corrupts. It is often given by the Devil, and it is from the Devil that most people seek it. His whole life, as he tells it himself, was one long demonic urge. Yet this experience ends in a reconciliation with power. Strindberg's Kings—Gustavus Vasa and Gustavus Adolphus—are rendered almost human, tolerant and generous, despite their sanguinary deeds, by their consciousness of the responsibility of power, by the withering away in them of ambition and demonic temptation in the face of their task to preserve and govern. Power may come from sin, and be given by the

Devil, but man ultimately defeats the Devil with divine help, for true power, like true knowledge, comes from God.

In all the *Historical Miniatures*, which begin with Moses and end with the French Revolution, and throughout his historical dramas *Gustavus Vasa*, *King Eric XIV* and *Gustavus Adolphus*—Strindberg is the only dramatist since Shakespeare's day to attempt a full Royal cycle—and in the modern one-act plays which made him world-famous, the central concern is with the use and abuse of power. This problem is clearly a Biblical one, with its roots in original sin, which Strindberg understands in the primitive sense of Genesis as a usurpation of power. The rest of his work mostly demonstrates the sins of the fathers being visited on the heads of the sons.

His birth and the social ostracism which resulted from the scandalous association of his parents (although this was already a legal union at the time of his birth) undoubtedly oppressed Strindberg throughout his life, witness *The Son of a Maid* and recurring allusions in his plays to 'masters' and 'servants'. *Miss Julie* is written entirely round this theme.

Strindberg's thought, however, never remains on a pedestrian level, sociological, psychological or naturalistic, not even when he employs the fashionable naturalistic technique on the stage. He always remains a tragic poet, who starts with a commonplace social problem and transforms it into mystics and metaphysics. One kind of feminine psychology is based on observation, but Strindberg is engaged in the eschatology of woman; he is concerned with woman's share in original sin. There is a social problem concerning children of tainted birth, but Strindberg is concerned with adultery in human history, the consequences arising from a usurpation, for adultery is first of all a sin against the first commandment, when man worships other gods than the true one. Adultery and usurpation in its broadest sense are Strindberg's two central themes. There is thus an intimate link between his 'naturalistic drama' on sex and his royal tragedies.

His fellow Nordic poet and contemporary Ibsen was chiefly a social satirist, and as such has been much misunderstood. He has been taken as a defender of women's rights because he wrote a story about a foolish woman and a philistine husband. Ibsen was a social satirist with a nostalgia for greater ages than the bourgeois nineteenth century; he was a poet of 'the great Royal thought' (*The Pretenders*); a poet of folklore and the Nordic tale (*Peer Gynt*)

a poetic soul in exile in the utilitarian world (*An Enemy of the People*) and practically throughout his life was a disciple of Balzac, from whom he took his leading idea of a 'secret thought'. The Liberal and rationalist Brandes, whose evidence can hardly be suspect, tells us of Ibsen's comment in despair over Garibaldi's entry into Rome in 1870: 'Our last city is taken from us. Henceforth everything will belong to the politicians!' Brandes also notes Ibsen's admiration for Nicholas I of Russia; at the same time he saw in the Paris Commune of 1871 an event which compelled his admiration, although his motives were different from those shared by the partisans of the Commune. This was a foreboding of the apocalyptic fall of the great Babylon, with its Parliaments, its bourgeoisie, its debased literary and artistic market. Yet Ibsen, an exile from society, as all true artists have been since merchants invaded the Temple over the ruins of thrones and altars, was less great a man than his Swedish counterpart. Ibsen only imagined the 'great secret thought' in a modern context; Strindberg saw it in the turning points of modern history. Ibsen only invented a few foolish women; Strindberg wrote a complete eschatology, the eternal metaphysics of the feminine. Woman brought original sin into the world, but a greater misfortune for mankind is for woman to cease to be woman. In all the 'sex-war' plays of Strindberg man is a victim. But a victim of what? Of no less a sin than condoning original sin and allowing woman to play the part of the male.

This meditation on original sin does not leave Strindberg even in his few bright moments of comic relief. His *Happy Island* is a story in the style of Swift and Defoe, in which shipwrecked men eat the fruit of ignorance and oblivion, thus delivering themselves to a new sort of Lucifer: the man who did not eat of the fruit of ignorance, and who dominates his innocent and kind fellow men more harshly than any devil.

Ultimately, Strindberg is almost an optimist. His religious philosophy was often distorted and made ridiculous by Nordic mystics such as Swedenborg, but he kept the heart of a child. A disobedient Eve ate the forbidden fruit, but Eve is now in Paradise. As long as she remains true to herself she gives joy to man, and even in her worst moments she desires to be loved. It is the sad destiny of man to love her so imperfectly, to the detriment of that true love which man ought to practise, the love of God.

Strindberg was a lover. One can doubt whether Petrarch was ever in love, one cannot doubt that Strindberg was. His love was

like the Great Lover's. God did not love men best in the Greeks, who sculpted human forms in perfect proportions, and who were probably made in those perfect proportions. He loved men best in the Jews, who were forbidden by Him to paint or sculpt human forms, and whose very faces are repulsive to other nations. The daughter of Sion manifested her love for her Lord in injurious, stupid and cruel ways. Strindberg's dramas of love and cruelty are an allegory of this Divine mystery, which he keeps in the background, but which he feels all the time. He is the historian of original sin and of the undying desire of purification in the lives of nations, down to the *moeurs du siècle* of his own time and to the most trivial *scènes de ménage* of his own life.

He wrote for the public of his time, who would not have understood the verses of Kleist or Schiller, let alone Shakespeare, Racine and Calderon, who continued to be staged as 'classics', that is as museum pieces. In spite of the realistic and naturalist language which spoils it, and which may mislead the spectator as to its true character, Strindberg's historical drama remains however truly royal. When Strindberg brings a King on to the stage, he makes him a real King, not a neurotic or a pervert, but a man and a sinner, facing the great moral dilemma of the ruler. He does not explain everything away scientifically by bringing in psychology or biology, as the Naturalists did following Zola; he confines himself to the central moral problem of power, leadership and kingship, without any attempt at arrogant 'debunking'.

Woman's revolt in the nineteenth century is for Strindberg a retribution for man's revolt in the sixteenth century. Most of his drama *The Nightingale of Wittemberg*, *Master Olaf*, *Gustavus Vasa* and *Eric XIV*—is set in this period.

Gustavus Vasa began his career as a rebel. He established his kingship in the face of all legitimate claims, against Christian of Denmark, who was supported by his brother-in-law the Emperor Charles V. The simple people remain true to the old faith, and so do the women, Margaret, Gustavus's wife, and her mother, a widow and a nun who still wears her habit in a Lutheran country. The merchants of the Hansa city, bankers to Gustavus and war-profiteers, urge him to continue the war. Revolt against the old faith leaves the young men in a state of hopeless cynicism and confusion of mind. The second generation of Protestants hates Luther. Gustavus hardly feels himself to be a Protestant at all; he takes up Luther's cause out of political expediency and then finds

it a source of embarrassment. The young men of the fifteen-forties—Prince Eric, son of Gustavus, later Eric XIV, and his secretary Jorghen, son of a faithless monk—feel themselves to be under a curse; they are 'sons of treason and perjury'. Almost the only dignified characters in the play are women, Queen Margaret, her mother, and Christine, the Catholic wife of Master Olaf, the Lutheran spiritual director to King Gustavus. The King himself is a cunning, harsh and cruel man. But if power corrupts, it can also redeem. Gustavus Vasa, and later Gustavus Adolphus in this play, are neither fanatics nor profiteers. Gustavus is a harsher master than the legitimate ruler would have been, but he is less of a tyrant than the partisans of the Rebellion would like him to be. The possession of power reveals to him a great new task which will eventually make him a statesman and provide him with a great royal thought—which will never be understood by his fellow rebels and partisans. Women are a link for him with the old order and the old faith, and he can still be moved by women's tears. Ultimately—and here Strindberg's optimism is formulated somewhat doubtfully in the terminology of his time—mankind may accept such rulers, for 'Purity has to be sacrificed', as one of the Pharisees says in 'Disciple John' in *Historical Miniatures*. Redemption by the wisdom which comes from power has a touch of Machiavelli about it; a touch once again of Balzac, who often saw ambition redeemed by statesman-like wisdom; and perhaps also of Nietzsche, despite Strindberg's reiterated protest that his thought was independent of Nietzsche's. In spite of this, Strindberg stands out clearly from the other three. His theme is sin, and all its implications: original sin, the sins of the fathers visited on the heads of the sons, the collective sin of the nations, which he saw just as the Jewish prophets of old did. The men of the province of Delakarlia take Gustavus's side once more, even after he has executed their leaders, for they are bound to him by the solidarity of their common crimes. Fundamentally, Strindberg's vision is Christian, despite the distorted arguments he formulates; he believes that rebellions and revolutions are a form of Purgatory, not of Hell, and that the process of purification will continue throughout History to the end.

He believed, and he demonstrated the truth, that the sins of the fathers are revisited on the sons; that modern states were born in sin, in revolt, in perjury, in broken loyalties; and that only a very few, truly exceptional men, who have acquired power by

usurpation and crime, can redeem themselves by fidelity to their own destiny, by tolerance and generosity, which are the signs of human greatness. Yet this is possible only so long as strong, harsh and cruel men can be moved by women's tears, and as long as women can cry. Sensitive men, kind and good men, are broken by the hysterical cries of women against which they have no weapons, for they have surrendered them by their own rebellion. Like all usurpers and illegitimate rulers, Woman is exacting, cruel and whimsical when she tries to rule. There is an apocalyptic note in Strindberg's historical vision, a unity of all the ages through rebellion and original sin, the temporal disorders of mankind.

No Catholic writer has ever given a darker picture than Strindberg of Luther's age and the Nordic Reformation. Hanseatic racketeers rob the churches of their treasures, the mind and heart of youth is poisoned by charlatans and cynics, tyrants and bandits arise on the ruins of the majestic old order. Nevertheless, Strindberg was not singling out the Lutheran Church, in which he was baptized and educated; his concern was with the secular fate of the nations and their ultimate spiritual destiny. His conclusion and his message was a warning against that easy compromise which his own age of Liberalism imagined to be possible. He reiterated the old Christian doctrine that the world is in disorder because of man's sin. Matter itself, in the form of human inventions, follows the way of corruption; this was his dying thought when the *Titanic* sank. The last gesture of his life, his dying prayers for those who perished, was the final stage in his life-long commentary on the fallen nature of man.

Strindberg was the great tragic poet of the age of Revolutions; he was the dramatist of the modern Apocalypse. He was one of those artists who are constitutionally incapable of producing anything mediocre. He has a sublime and a hideous side, but he showed the hideous things for the sake of the sublime. He died on the eve of European cataclysms and felt that the icy cold of his native country was rapidly moving towards Europe's heart. He saw Europe lost in revolt against God's order and harmony, he saw it sinking into scientific barbarism. His spirit, like the heroes of his *Swedish Destinies* and his heroine St. Bridget of Sweden, went South, with a message of the eternally valid virtue of courage and faith, with the hope of Redemption and Resurrection. Strindberg was the last bard of tragic Royal destinies; but above all, he was the poet of the royal destiny of the purified human soul.

# POETRY AND BELIEF

## Fideism from Dryden to Eliot

By NICHOLAS JOOST<sup>1</sup>

Fideism: 'A system which exaggerates the function of faith in the knowledge of truth.'—*Dictionary of Dogmatic Theology*.

**F**IDEISM, that perdurable error! Despite all our centuries of haggling over its definition, the problem lives with us, in terms as extreme today as in the age of Dryden. A certain cast of mind is perennially discomfited, chilled and warmed, by the polarities of scepticism and belief. When this sceptic moves southward to the climes of faith, his rationalization inevitably follows adoption of his conviction, and the process is fairly obvious. The writer, tired with the unending struggle of ignorant armies clashing in the world's nighttime, rests finally in the rich authority of the Western past. Philosophical terminology and aesthetic vocabulary may differ from age to age in recounting that spiritual voyage; the intellectual attitudes behind the words, however, show analogies not, after all, very surprising. Thus Dryden. Thus Johnson. Thus Henry Adams, that early explorer of twentieth-century *longueurs*. Thus Yeats.

But the list does not end with the dead. This heresy lives on, its adherents are living writers. The orthodoxy, however, is secular; the defection is no longer from a religious but from a social and political norm. The demand to conform to some concept of right reason remains as strong as ever; only its content has changed. Today's orthodoxy is secular liberalism, relativistic and pragmatic, with its insistence on emancipation from all absolutes. Today's heresy, consequently, is the heresy of faith—not an exaggerated faith that deprecates knowing, but any degree of faith in any absolute, religious, political, or literary. In recent years the most notable defections from orthodox liberalism have occurred among writers of two antithetical groups. In the 'thirties literary men adopted the Marxian faith, then they recanted, embalming

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of English, Loyola University, Chicago.

their recantations in such melancholy monuments to a period as *The God That Failed*.

In the war and post-war years a new variant of the heresy of faith has been gaining ground. This new heresy is nothing less than the older, ante-liberal orthodoxy, the belief in metaphysical absolutes. It is a return to the old orthodoxy of the spirit in protest against the moral and aesthetic relativism of naturalism, which was and is liberalism's aesthetic system. One aspect of the return to the old orthodoxy is, quite simply, that it is a means of self-justification, whether in religion or in art. The need to justify one's relation to the universe is nothing new in England or America, but if it is nothing new, the urgency of that need has increased acutely in the past hundred years, with their bewildering and multitudinous material changes. The need for justification grows overpowering as logic itself becomes, to many minds, a mathematical or semantic plaything or an irrelevancy to solving the problems of human existence. The difficulty of achieving an integrated personal vision has steadily increased as our liberal capitalistic culture has grown in fantastic intricacy; still, the writer must attempt to achieve harmony out of what sometimes seems to be an almost chaotic complexity. In any period the artist cannot work successfully unless he formulates, or passively accepts, the real or fancied security of some subjectively harmonious world-view. When a young novelist such as Crawford Power or a young poet such as Robert Lowell turns to orthodoxy, whether of belief or art, he does so in order that he may integrate himself as person and as craftsman within the world as he sees it. This much is clear.

But what of the progress from scepticism to acceptance of a traditional system of absolutes? How shall we describe it? Do the writers all fail in their attempt to reason out their acceptance? How shall we evaluate it? Is their acceptance of the traditional orthodoxy, of religion or art, simply a crabbed 'New Scholasticism', a 'Calvinism of the spirit'? Or does the old theological distinction between faith and fideism still apply? In short, are the liberal critics justified in castigating *per se* a faith or a philosophy based on an absolute conception of the universe?

The failure of reason to formulate a solution that in its details will endure from century to century is hardly alarming. Surely, as the world changes in minor material fact, philosophy will adapt. What causes alarm—and not solely among the liberals—is the abandonment of reason as a viable means of solving those basic

questions about his existence that man asks, questions fundamentally religious and aesthetic in nature. When a writer turns from the rational attempt to harmonize his view of the universe and relies without further ado on a tradition to unify his life and art, he may, in all honesty, deceive himself and others of similar disposition, but he does not convince everybody. Indeed, the upshot of the matter is that he calls not merely his own point of view but the entire tradition into question by those who do not share that fideism.

The traditionalist fallacy is no more common an error, however, than is the refusal, wilful or not, to distinguish between it and a reasoned acceptance of traditional values which are absolute. Even so acute an American critic as Van Wyck Brooks, reacting against the increasing acceptance of absolutes, refuses to distinguish the traditionalist fallacy from an aesthetic or a religion based on absolute values.<sup>1</sup> For that matter, he apparently sees no difference worth noting between the fideist and the Marxist. Instead, he lumps together Eliot and his school, such Catholic converts as Thomas Merton (whose famous conversion and subsequent vocation Brooks cites as typifying a retreat 'more substantial' than imaginative fantasies, but nonetheless essentially an act 'renouncing life'), and the sinister growth of 'the faith in authority', 'the reversion to absolutes, whether Black or Red', as unalterably opposed to a more liberal, more truly American Jeffersonianism. Such reversion to the old orthodoxy is, it seems, abandonment of one's reason. Brooks is not alone. He lends respectability to the critical position, seen occasionally in *The Nation* and in the books of Paul Blanshard, that acceptance of authority in religion necessarily goes hand in glove with authoritarianism in politics and in art. In sum, these liberals may fairly be described as equating faith with fideism, and fideism with fascism, Marxist communism, and a totalitarian aesthetic.

How valid is their equation? Either the writers under attack must resign themselves to activities labelled authoritarian and therefore un-American (or, presumably, un-British), or they must clarify not only the distinctions between faith and fideism and between religion and art but, further, the implications of a literary criticism based on metaphysics. These writers must prove to the liberals—who constitute the mass of intelligentsia in the West—that essential elements of the minority newcomers are, without

<sup>1</sup> *The Confident Years*, New York, 1952.

harm to democratic culture, assimilable and, to use the current jargon of the dominant party, even 'enriching' for that culture.

The key figure here is Dryden. That 'Bacon of the rhyming crew', not any twentieth-century poet, is the literary ancestor of those who today profess to be classicist in literature, whether or not they are royalist in politics and Anglo-Catholic in religion. Dryden, Professor Bredvold has shown us, was a fideist, which is to say he moved from that extreme of philosophical scepticism, Pyrrhonism, to Roman Catholicism not through the use but through the abandonment of reason.<sup>1</sup>

How, we may ask, did fideism affect Dryden as a man of letters: and how is his case pertinent to our discussion?

Dryden's disagreement with the central principle of religious rationalism—that man naturally, without revelation, can arrive at the main tenets of traditional Christianity—is so complete that it separates him not only from the deism of the latter seventeenth century, but also from the rationalistic tendencies of the Anglican theologians of the age, such as Cudworth, More, and the other Cambridge Platonists. As a sceptic Dryden had held that truth was difficult, if not impossible, to find; in the preface to *Religio Laici* he stated that he was 'naturally inclined to scepticism in philosophy'. But the result was not a denial of all standards and an attempt to flaunt all convention, in the manner of a Cocteau hero; rather, it was, albeit with scepticism, an abiding by the received customs and conventions he found about him.

Dryden could not, however, refrain from intellectual enquiry; his plays are full of ideas, intellectual arguments that externalize the debate within his own mind. But what if one's scepticism is so extreme that he cannot resolve it? Again, provisionally one abides by convention. And how is the debate to be resolved, if not by reason? The fideists of Dryden's day had an answer. There is a distinction, they said, between theological and philosophical truth. There exists a double truth, as it were, so that a doctrine which is true scientifically or philosophically can be false theologically. Thus certain truths that may be incapable of exact demonstration or even contrary to the known laws of science we may nevertheless hold. Yet, if we cannot reasonably hold such truths, we must surely make some appeal to an authority higher than reason. The Bible? Ah, yes, but the Bible, as Père Simon had shown in his *Histoire critique du vieux testament*, does not interpret its own truths.

<sup>1</sup> *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden*, Ann Arbor, 1934.

Its manuscripts are imperfect, there is no wholly reliable tradition for their interpretation, readings are often doubtful, and the entire question of personal interpretation of the Bible is fraught with difficulties. In fact, only one agency is capable of authoritative interpretation of the supra-rational truths of the Bible, an agency divinely inspired, an agency moreover that was responsible, beyond matters of interpretation, for safeguarding the truths revealed in the Bible. Had it not existed before the New Testament? Had it not brought together the scattered writings of the Apostles and Fathers and divided the canonical from the apocryphal? To Dryden, at any rate, the argument was convincing.

He had written in 1672 some lines for Almanzor, hero of *The Conquest of Granada*:

By reason, man a godhead may discern,  
But how he would be worshipped, cannot learn.

The way to worship Dryden found in the authority, first, of the Church of England, and then in that of the Church of Peter. In his old age he wrote a retrospective statement of his thought on the matter:

We have indeed the highest probabilities for our revealed religion; arguments which will preponderate with a reasonable man, upon a long and careful disquisition; but I have always been of opinion, that we can demonstrate nothing, because the subject-matter is not capable of demonstration. It is the particular grace of God, that any man believes the mysteries of our faith; which I think a conclusive argument against the doctrine of persecution in any Church.

Granted God's grace, the way to worship was clear: one accepted the authority vested in the Church. The matter is closed, the truth under discussion is not capable of demonstration. The judgements of God, Origen wrote, are an abyss; we cannot question the peculiar grace of God that 'any man believes the mysteries of our faith'.

Dryden's attitude is of the greatest significance. His appeal to authority in religion cannot be doubted. That authoritarianism, however, has in the mundane fields of politics and literature a result which is the precise opposite from what we might expect did we take seriously the predictions of critics who, like Mr. Brooks, link inextricably authoritarianism in religion, art, and politics. Here, indeed, Dryden is a key figure to understand in an analysis of the current controversy.

For Dryden rejected the analogy according to which acceptance of religious authority must accompany acceptance of absolute political authority and absolute authority in art. Rather, his exaggeration of the function of faith in knowing truth led to a rejection of extreme authority in politics. There Dryden remained a sceptic, which meant that he remained a moderate, without violently held opinions. Dryden was a Tory, but, as Professor Bredvold remarked, his Toryism was eminently reasonable and constitutional.<sup>1</sup> He consistently inveighed against extremes 'Of pop'lar sway or arbitrary reign'. His mistrust was too ingrained for him to develop as a seventeenth-century counterpart of the modern fascist; he wrote that preservation of the king's right 'destroys not our propriety, but maintains us in it'.

Dryden mistrusted what he was not alone in calling the mob; he deplored any changes that might result in the royal power being drawn down to the 'dregs of a democracy'; but he argued for law that would right inequity rather than for revolution that would abolish law. And are we to try to fit his conception of politics exactly into our present framework? Are we, further, to insist that all writers, of any time, share our political convictions? Dryden himself would disagree; in *The Hind and the Panther* he stood for tolerance:

Of all the tyrannies on humankind,  
The worst is that which persecutes the mind.  
Let us but weigh at what offence we strike;  
'Tis but because we cannot think alike.  
In punishing of this we overthrow  
The law of nations and of nature too.  
Beasts are the subjects of tyrannic sway,  
Where still the stronger on the weaker prey;  
Man only of a softer mold is made,  
Not for his fellows' ruin, but their aid:  
Created kind, beneficent, and free,  
The noble image of the Deity.

In all walks of life, Dryden demanded intellectual freedom. He did not state that all walks of life are equally virtuous, but he did state that men must not resort to coercion in an effort to impose one group's conception of orthodoxy on the nation. That is tyrannic sway.

As in politics he demanded tolerance—and religion in his day

<sup>1</sup> Bredvold, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

was politics in its practical aspect—so in literature he demanded and practised tolerance. This is not the place for an examination of Dryden's critical theory, but it is pertinent to show that that theory had a sound and solid basis, and, what is more, an enduring basis in Dryden's scepticism. In art, his habit of doubting never left him, and in this he was one with the new spirit of scientific enquiry. In his first mature work, *Of Dramatic Poesy*, we find the modern, sceptical, scientific mind speaking in Dryden's own language :

My whole discourse was sceptical, according to that way of reasoning which was used by Socrates, Plato, and all the academiques of old, which Tully and the best of the ancients followed, and which is imitated by the modest inquisitions of the Royal Society. That it is so, not only the name will show, which is *an Essay*, but the frame and composition of the work. You see it is a dialogue sustain'd by persons of several opinions, all of them left doubtful, to be determined by the readers in general.

One of the most often remarked qualities of this essay is that Dryden presents four differing opinions on the English drama and presents them so cogently and fairly that we are left at the end of the dialogue with four critical views each of which is tenable. Surely this is the opposite of the authoritarian spirit in literature. And to the end of his long career Dryden practised the open-mindedness that he invariably preached. To the end he was an empirical critic. If he assimilated 'influences', he made no systematic effort—as did Pope—to articulate an aesthetic. One of Dryden's outstanding literary virtues is his ability to transcend that neo-classical doctrine as prophet of which he has so often been described. Dryden once wrote that "'tis difficult to write justly on anything, but almost impossible in praise'; yet he himself remains the model of 'encomiastic criticism' in his assessment of Chaucer. As Professor Atkins has noted, what Dryden found to admire in Shakespeare and Chaucer 'was based on no formal rules, but on his own instinctive reactions submitted to the test of Nature or reason, a test, it should be added, which to him represented something more than mere common-sense or the prose understanding'.<sup>1</sup> No other writer has been more consistently representative of the free critical spirit.

Dryden's conversion has always been a *cause célèbre*. Even after Professor Bredvold's detailed proof of the sincerity of that con-

<sup>1</sup> J. W. H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries*, London, 1951.

version, its motivation, as reasoned out in *Religio Laici* and *The Hind and the Panther*, is clear only to those who have made a closer than casual study of the subtle modulations of that remarkable mind. Dryden's fideism is not a matter easily understood and, once understood, easily sympathized with, by either his fellow Catholics or those outside the Church. It is not for other Catholics to condemn one who has, they believe, already been judged by his Creator; but it is only just to point out that Dryden's case has been and is still used by non-Catholics as a typical instance of the venality that alone could have prompted such an intelligent man to submit himself to the absolute authority of Rome. The popular American anthologist Louis Untermeyer writes that 'Dryden's characteristic vacillation failed him in the end. When James II ascended the throne, Dryden, a determined time-server, became a Roman Catholic. He was then in his mid-fifties. He prepared *The Hind and the Panther* as an argument for Roman Catholicism, but the public was tired of him and exasperated with the Stuarts.'<sup>1</sup> The liberal mind in its most generous mood finds faith wellnigh impossible to comprehend; fideism compounds the difficulty, and, as with Dryden, the motives of the fideist are simply opaque. He is dismissed as a rogue or a fool or an eccentric.

The passage of time has not removed the difficulty of communicating the reasonableness of faith in absolutes. After Dryden, the Augustans attempted to rationalize Christianity into a religion of nature, but deism, the result of their efforts, was no more than *un athéisme déguisé*, as Bossuet bluntly put it. In England, and in France, fideism as it existed in the eighteenth century was the resort of Christians whose reasoned acceptance of their religion as a rational, coherent system had been made impossible by the work of the new science and philosophy. Bacon, the apostle of induction, had first excepted God from his speculations; in the face of man's impotence before the method of the new science, Pascal had heralded the necessity of a primordial act of faith by the individual human reason in search of truth; and Locke had reinforced Pascal by stating that we cannot know reality itself, only its qualities, the appearances of things. In the general retreat of dogma from the triumph of these theories, Huet, Bishop of Avranches, wrote that the acceptance of Divine Revelation is our sole basis for certitude, for the reason cannot transcend mere probability. By the middle of the eighteenth century Hume had

<sup>1</sup> Louis Untermeyer, *A Treasury of the World's Great Poems*, New York, 1942.

climaxed the trend by asserting the difference of opinion between an atheist and a theist to be only a verbal one. Discarding the arguments of reason—they apparently led inexorably to Hume's extreme scepticism—many Christians relied on Revelation, tradition, and the authority of the Church to convince themselves that Christianity was what they wanted it to be, a living *fides*. Of course, not all Christians were fideists; neither were all fideists anti-rationalists to the total exclusion of reason, of a systematic philosophy. A fideist might conduct his mundane affairs on rigidly logical principles, while reserving religion as an area in which faith was the sole operative and efficacious power.

No figure of the age was more deeply affected by this tendency than Samuel Johnson. Influenced though he was by Pascal (he gave Boswell a copy of the *Pensées* on Good Friday, 1779), Johnson conscientiously attempted a thoroughgoing rationalism that combined satisfactorily both reason and faith. Less diffident than Dryden, Johnson firmly grounded his belief in the Christian Revelation on the historicity of the Bible, as well as on the convincing testimony inherent in the events of the New Testament. 'The Christian religion has very strong evidences,' he remarked to Boswell. 'It, indeed, appears in some degree strange to reason; but in History we have undoubted facts, against which, reasoning *a priori*, we have more arguments than we have for them; but then, testimony has great weight, and casts the balance.'<sup>1</sup> Human experience, which constantly contradicted theory, remained for Johnson the great test of truth. 'A system, built upon the discoveries of a great many minds, is always of more strength, than what is produced by the mere workings of any one mind, which, of itself, can do little.' The appeal to experience is characteristic of Johnson; similarly, his final test of all great literature was the requirement of *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. The truth of religion and the beauty of literature had to meet the test of time. As to Christianity, 'besides the strong evidence which we have for it, there is a balance in its favour from the number of great men who have been convinced of its truth, after a serious consideration of the question'.<sup>2</sup>

Yet this is not rationalism, but a mitigated traditionalism, which holds in essence that Christianity is reasonable because the common sense or assent of mankind has held it to be so. It is a

<sup>1</sup> James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, New York, 1933, I, 266.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 303.

disguised authoritarianism. Johnson could admit the intrinsic objective evidence of the Gospels as true only when he compared that evidence with the undoubted but equally strange facts of 'History'. And to reassure himself, Johnson appealed to the great men of the past—he mentioned Grotius—who have been convinced of Christian truth.

*Rasselas* is an excellent example of Johnson's fideistic tendency. Superficially one of the many tales in the then popular Oriental *genre*, the Abyssinian setting of *Rasselas* is a thin veneer that does not even pretend to disguise its essential tendentiousness. This brief novel of ideas is a detailed and comprehensive denial of the ultimate efficacy of rationalism. Reason, or if you prefer, common sense, can lead us to discern the most pleasing mundane existence; reason can show us the difference between good and evil; reason can even show us the vanity of human wishes; but reason cannot show us how to achieve perfect happiness. Such happiness is to be achieved only by immortality, a state about which philosophy tells us little and of which it cannot assure us. That the soul 'will not be annihilated by him that made it, we must humbly learn from higher authority', announced Imlac, Johnson's philosopher-spokesman in *Rasselas*.

Elsewhere Johnson used two rational arguments to support his belief in personal immortality. He argued from the nature of justice as applied to the problem of evil and also used the related argument of compensation, saying to Boswell, 'that the Supreme Being, who is good as he is great, will hereafter compensate for our present sufferings in this life'.<sup>1</sup> But in *Rasselas* Johnson holds out no such rational hope.

Instead, he shows us that in none of its variety can the natural life be assured of earthly, must less unending, happiness. The approach to a solution of the problem of immortality must accord with right reason; Johnson did not go to the extreme of Huet's fideism. Philosophy, we see by the example of Imlac, is efficacious —to a point. Beyond this point we must accept the answers to our questions on faith; else we must gloomily reject these answers because we lack faith in the revelations of 'higher authority'. Philosophy cannot answer the question of man's destiny. Only religion, based ultimately not on rational proof but on faith in authority, can give the final answer.

Like Dryden, Johnson was a Tory—and like Dryden's, his

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 224.

Toryism was reasonable and constitutional. Surely we can forgive as unimportant the political idiosyncrasies of a man who believed as ardently as Dryden in intellectual freedom: 'Every man has a right to utter what he thinks truth, and every other man has a right to knock him down for it. Martyrdom is the test.'<sup>1</sup>

That Johnson's criterion in literature was the test of experience we have seen; consequently, it should come as no great surprise that he denounced the neo-classical rules as 'arbitrary edicts of legislators, authorized only by themselves'.<sup>2</sup> But the discarding of neo-classical doctrine was not merely a destructive act; as a positive guide he advocated an approach to literature based on the law of Nature. Here we see Johnson's moderation, for he also rejected the test of mere individual taste. Johnson has been called dogmatic, but far from being an authoritarian, he always tested works of literature pragmatically, appealing to reason, experience, and Nature. If the literary men of his age adulated Johnson as a dictator, they did so not because he set himself up to rule arbitrarily, but rather because his sanity and ripe wisdom—and his limitations, too—were the qualities natural in a leader.

That the nineteenth century should deprecate Johnson's accomplishments is to be expected. Macaulay quoted Burke with approval as having said that Johnson appears far greater in Boswell's books than in his own. Johnson's mind, wrote Macaulay, was at least as remarkable for narrowness as for strength. Again, to Macaulay, Johnson decided literary questions like a lawyer, not like a legislator: 'His whole code of criticism rested on pure assumption, for which he sometimes quoted a precedent or an authority, but rarely troubled himself to give a reason drawn from the nature of things.' How far these strictures are from the truth of the matter is quite obvious; but, then, Macaulay as a modern liberal did not sympathize with Johnson's reference to a system of absolute values.

The dominant belief of the nineteenth century was this liberalism. Its labels are familiar: Unitarianism in religion, utilitarianism and, later, pragmatism in philosophy, the 'touchstone' method in literary criticism. It was a cult of progress, of gradualism. It studied the classics, to be sure, but against a background of relative values. The scientific point of view was supreme, and this is tantamount to saying that a comparative methodology, at

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 341.

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<sup>2</sup> *Rambler*, 158.

bottom relativist in its unconscious assumptions, consciously assumed the pretensions of a metaphysics.

There was a second current of thought, however, especially on the continent of Europe, basically opposed to liberalism, although it, too, wore with many of its adherents the rosy colour of the century's optimism. Those who could not abide the bourgeois-liberal philosophy, degraded as it had been to the summary exclamation '*Enrichessez-vous!*' were drawn to idealism. The idealist could and did ignore the vulgar materiality of nineteenth-century liberalism in his impregnable ivory fortress, *Teufelsdröckh* in his garret, and could and did defy the scientific point of view by asserting a religion of immanentism. Dryden had, in a sense, made use of immanentism when he had stated that it is the particular grace of God that any man believes the mysteries of the Catholic faith. Johnson had vehemently argued against this doctrine, which he saw to be dangerously akin to the non-conformist belief that in order to be saved each man must come to God by his consciousness of a saving inner light: it savoured of a want of law. Of the *inward light* he remarked that it was a principle utterly incompatible with social or civil security: if a man 'pretends to a principle of action of which I can know nothing, nay, not so much as that he has it, but only that he pretends to it; how can I tell what that person may be prompted to do? When a person professes to be governed by a written ascertainable law, I can then know where to find him.'<sup>1</sup> But even Johnson, despite his dogged attempt to accept only that faith which was reasonable, turned to the traditionalist argument to confirm his logic. An idealist would have resolved the matter differently.

Kant, Fichte, Hegel distinguished between a pure, *a priori* reason incapable of being scientifically demonstrated and a practical reason with its *a posteriori* judgements operable only in the mundane realm of science and logic; thus the great idealist philosophers gave writers the necessary loophole of escape into a world of absolutes, furnished them with the means of self-justification. One did not attain an understanding of this world of ideas, for such knowledge was not experiential—it was innate. Ideas of the divine spirit animating the universe, of good and evil were not only internal and innate; they *were* the person. Self-realization was no more than the intuition of these eternal ideas that constituted the inner man, the 'I'. One's ego contained in itself, imman-

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, I, 420–21.

ently, the universe, the World-Soul. So intimate was this All-enfolding Presence that Faust could assure Gretchen that asking formal profession of belief from a sage would seem a mocking play, a sarcasm on the asker. One's duty lay not in formal profession of religion but in living in harmony with this Idea, this force ever weaving its eternal secret round one's life. No appeal to an ultimate reliance on intrinsic objective evidence but instead an appeal to subjective intuition, immanentist writers quickly recognized for what it was, a weapon of rebellion. The idealists' dichotomy between logic and intuition, between the world of fact and that of ideas, underwent a metamorphosis: it became the unbridgeable gulf between the artist and the bourgeoisie who should have been his public.

How different the nineteenth-century writer in rebellion was from his predecessors! Where Dryden appealed to tradition, to reason, against MacFlecknoe's dullness and against religious persecution; where he strove to restore reason to its rightful place; there precisely we have the contrast of the nineteenth-century writers most interesting to us today. Baudelaire, Melville, Dostoevski in varying degrees conducted their warfare according to the idealist strategy. Their search for a valid tradition, however admirably and sincerely motivated, was wildly irrational; it was an irrationality of desperation, born of the dynamics of their plight. As Western culture evolved with increasing acceleration in the direction of technological complexity, understanding its processes and a comprehensive, integrated vision of their significance became more difficult to achieve. Yet the writers must triumph over the complexity, must harmonize the world as they saw it. So desperate was their need, so extreme their attempt, that they discovered harmony only in death: the love-death of Tristan and Isolde, the death of Whitman's symbolic mocking-bird. The artists' revolt, then, was not only against the dominant liberalism of the day but also was against the reasoned orthodoxy of the Western past.

That they should rebel against the latter is entirely plausible. Traditional orthodoxy was on the defensive everywhere, on all sides. Or, rather, it was passive, like Eliot's patient, etherized on the operating table. Would it die? Certainly its fate seemed unpropitious, handled as it was by the gentle, the inept, the formalists, and the reactionaries. In religion, even Catholicism, when it did not retreat from liberal dominance on the one hand and

idealist rebellion on the other, made a queasy, questionable peace with the victors or sought an equally uneasy alliance with the rebels.

When Dostoevski rebelled against liberalism—what Père de Lubac has termed atheist humanism—he condemned, also, Catholicism and, apparently, the classicist tradition in art. The alternative to the Grand Inquisitor, that ungodly amalgam of Catholic, liberal, and Marxist elements, is not to be found in a return to a rational philosophy. The alternative is faith. Yet Dostoevski's Alyosha is not a mystic, sees no vision in his moment of conversion. Alyosha's solution, his victory, is emotional; undergoing a sentimental catharsis, he finds God immanent in the universe, and he becomes aware of this indwelling Power, not by intellection and not by induction, but through the moving force of love. It is a peculiarly Russian, Byzantine, Eastern solution, appealing perhaps, but evasive. Alyosha does not logically refute the question logically posed by Ivan. The intensive, rhapsodic quality of Alyosha's love cannot be sustained for long by most of us. Powerful and prophetic and true as *The Brothers Karamazov* is, we may question whether Dostoevski gives in the novel an answer satisfying to those writers who seek their solution within the Western tradition, with its logical emphasis on causality.

Like Dostoevski, torn between the scepticism of Ivan and the unquestioning faith of Alyosha, the American Henry Adams was one of those rebels against the liberalism of his environment. Adams' significance lies in two contrasting aspects of his personality. He had a nostalgia for the past—not merely the good old days of America prior to '61, but the mediaeval past and even deeper recesses of the Western cultural unconscious. Yet he was also, like Dostoevski, a prophetic figure. Henry Adams was one of the first post-modern men. His personality itself, in this sense, was post-modern, and his consciously formulated beliefs were prophetically post-modern.

In the mind of Henry Adams, as his letters reveal, occurred a struggle between two opposing sides; the one seeking some unitary, comprehensive belief in a positive set of values; the other and more modern rejecting all the beliefs that came under examination. In the end pessimism and negativism—those end products of a devaluated liberalism—won out. For Adams, Christianity was not tenable; Stoicism—in itself, a system devoid of positive content, with only structure to commend it—seemed the immediate but ultimately unsatisfactory answer.

Adams and Dostoevski. These two men typify that nineteenth-century division in which the dominant group was, despite its overt statements, optimistic, materialistic and capitalistic in its unstated, underlying assumptions. As post-modern men ourselves, we find Adams and Dostoevski more attractive than the Comtes, the Spencers, the Huxleys. The rebels—among them Baudelaire, Kierkegaard, and Melville—lacked the self-confidence of the ruling liberals, were less sure of themselves, even to the point of mental breakdown. Conscious of the failure of liberalism to evolve in depth (to do so would have meant the death of liberalism, for the putting out of roots would have meant anchoring their postulates to a set of absolutes); of its evasion of the basic aesthetic problem of good and evil (which liberalism, to be true to its nature, must define in terms of relative, desirable or undesirable material values); above all, conscious of the fundamental insincerity of optimistic materialism in the service of capital, the rebels sought a way out of their spiritual dilemma that was not offered by the dominant group.

Almost inevitably they despaired, broke down, turned to contemplation, compromised with authority. Not many of them found a positive belief even in the several varieties of idealism. Adams failed to evolve or to discover tenets that would have given him the answers he sought. He knew where, at least for himself, they lay, but he could not believe them. He wrote to Margaret Chanler:

. . . being a poor bit of materialised *Energetik*, I have no resource but the old one, taught by one's brothers in childhood—to grin and bear it; nor is this refuge much ennobled by calling it stoicism. The defect in this old remedy is that it helps others not at all, and oneself only by a sort of moral suicide.

I try to busy myself with our favourite philosophy, but I rather agree with you and your friend Bergson that St. Thomas said all there was to say. On the whole I think I like to keep my milk and my flies separate. Bergson does not much amuse me. I like my Schopenhauer and I like my Kelvin—I like metaphysics and I like physics—but I don't much care to reconcile them, though I enjoy making them fight. What I like most in the Schoolmen is their rule of cutting infinite sequences short. They insist on stopping at the prime motor at once. Bergson and all the speculators who follow Kant, start with Space, and then merge that Space in Thought, and are bound to merge that Thought-space in Hyperthought-space and so on to infinity like our friend Keyser; but become scared and stop, without explaining the reason for stopping. They

give me no sort of help. Time and Space are conditions of Thought, and so far good; but I can reckon an infinite hierarchy of them in mathematics, one just as good as the other—concepts of concepts—and why, in space, should I stop? . . .

I like best Bergson's frank surrender to the superiority of Instinct over Intellect. You know how I have preached that principle. . . . In fact I wrote once a whole volume—called my *Education*—. . . in order to recall how Education may be shown to consist in following the intuitions of instinct.

The conclusion of the letter, playful as it is, evinces Adams' inability to make his knowledge of St. Thomas work concretely; again we have the problem of belief. 'I am glad that you mean to resume your duties in New York society. Except for women, society is now an infinite solution; a mere ocean of separate particles; and you can help it to one little centre. I own that the centre will do nothing; but it may play itself to be real.'<sup>1</sup> The famous opposition in Adams' *Education* between the Virgin and the Dynamo evinces his knowledge of the need for a return to a rational orthodoxy; but that knowledge was not operative.

'Either our society must stop or bust': Adams was not calling for a static, monolithic state. He was calling for an effort to curb the Dynamo in a civilization controlled by the Virgin. His disclaimer that he for one cared not whether society stopped or busted simply does not ring true when we compare it to his stated distaste for stoicism. We may say that Adams did not believe what he practised. He believed, as he wrote in the *Education*, that after the Civil War 'The old formulas had failed, and a new one had to be made, but, after all, the object was not extravagant or eccentric. One sought no absolute truth . . .' Then why the nostalgia for the Virgin, the mistrust of the Dynamo?

In the last third of a century, since Adams' death, the aesthetic rebels have changed their allegiance. By and large they have taken the side of the Virgin and have consciously sought an absolute truth. One of the curious phenomena of the change in direction and content of this rebellion has been Dostoevskii's ambiguous position in the West. As an artist and prophet he has been revered, but his idealist resolution of the problem of belief, of good and evil, has not been acceptable to most of the rebellious intellectuals. Rightly or wrongly, they consider Alyosha's answer to Ivan's allegory of the Grand Inquisitor a beautiful evasion of the problem

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Letters of Henry Adams*, ed. Newton Arvin, New York, 1951, pp. 262-263.

that the West must face and solve, if it is to survive, in logical terms. Of the two writers, Adams it was who pointed the way, and for that act we must be grateful.

The leaders in the movement to restore a reasonable tradition—Maritain, T. S. Eliot, Tate, and Ransom we may cite as representative—have been and are theoreticians of a high order. They have passed through and beyond the defeat of Adams and have emerged with a reasonable faith in the knowledge that he and they had attained: men can evaluate reality, can know truth, ultimately by intrinsic objective evidence. Where Adams, as he wrote Margaret Chanler, reverted to his boyhood stoicism, these leaders have matured. Where Adams could not attain to a wider or profounder faith than that in individuals; where like all humanists he felt that an exceptional individual furnished our disintegrating society with its 'little centre'; the rebels who would return to reason see the inadequacy of that heresy which holds man to be sufficient to his own salvation, which holds with Smerdyakov that all is allowed.

There are dangers, of course, that the appeal to reason may fail. In a new realization of the Western tradition of Aristotle and St. Thomas, of Virgil and Dante, the writer may all too easily fall into the pit of traditionalism. Then, too, there is the danger of exclusiveness, of committing oneself wholly to the tradition with no regard for its modification, its essential adaptability and fluidity. The Western tradition can adapt and indeed is adapting to the impact of liberalism and idealism without becoming a watery eclecticism; it will surely account for the existence of the Dynamo. If Maritain has returned to Thomism, if Eliot has instituted the New Criticism, they have done so to reply to the chaos of standards between two World Wars, not as a reversion to an archaic conception of man's estate. Eliot has explained that two hundred years ago, when it was taken for granted that one knew well enough what literature was, terms could be used more freely and carelessly without definition but that now there is an urgent need for experiment in criticism of a new kind, which will consist largely in a logical and dialectical study of terms used.

Clarification of the distinctions between faith and fideism and between religion and art; the implications of a literary criticism based on metaphysics: these we have remarked as necessary tasks for the advocates of the rational tradition, for the merely negative purpose of answering the liberals and for the positive purpose of

leading Western culture to an integration of values, to a proper knowledge of its destiny. Dryden's case exemplifies the consequences of a failure to distinguish adequately between a reasonable faith and an irrational reliance on tradition and quietism. Both Johnson and Dryden exemplify the need for a distinction between religion and art. No more anti-authoritarian writers ever lived; yet in religion they both accepted authority. What are the implications of their literary criticism? Johnson grounded his own view on reason and Nature, Dryden to some extent further grounded his on the 'rules' of neo-classicism; but both men found concretely in their critical work that, in Pope's phrase, Nature and Homer were the same. Just as importantly, both critics used the comparative method of Plutarch (and Arnold) and found it valuable; but they did not use this 'touchstone' method by itself, for it was a tool capable of relative evaluations only; and they believed works of art, however great, never to be their own referents.

The sanity of their rationalism is impressive when we realize that scepticism for Dryden and law for Johnson, apparently antithetical assumptions, resulted in a noble intellectual tolerance. Religion for them was central, was the basis of the sense of proportion. And it is true that only when art itself becomes a religion, or when men worship the State, there arises the danger of an ugly total authority, grounded neither in respect for the person nor for God. Art and politics and economics cannot, in the nature of things, develop metaphysical systems to gauge the universe primarily by aesthetic, political, or economic concepts. They are subsidiary activities, not unifying and controlling activities; a culture as advanced as ours, when it substitutes concepts primarily economic or political (and when the artists substitute values primarily aesthetic) for good and evil, must necessarily disintegrate. These values are subsidiary; only a metaphysics can integrate, and only a dualistic metaphysics can reasonably limit its definitions so that they will be clear and useful. Otherwise we have no reason for stopping, but end somewhere in the cloudy ecstasies of idealism; or, as Henry Adams noted, we frankly surrender to the superiority of Instinct over Intellect. It is a fact that our bourgeoisie and many of our artists have surrendered to the inferior values; perhaps this capitulation is the reason modern culture has become imbued with materialism. It has abjured metaphysics, and the necessary ingredient of any metaphysics is God, that 'prime motor' of Adams' persiflage.

And after all, what has liberalism to offer? As Van Wyck Brooks states the case for 'Jeffersonianism', it seems to be an arrogantly exclusive world-view. Apparently anybody who accepts philosophical or religious absolutes would be excluded from participation in the American tradition, which Brooks equates with his version of nineteenth-century liberalism. Apparently everybody ought to put his faith in progress, material progress that would create physiological wellbeing. Everybody ought to put his faith in humanism, should believe in the aboriginal goodness of man and in man's ultimate perfectibility. Those who, like Eliot, according to Brooks, believe that men are essentially bad and who, like Eliot and his disciples, hold that the acceptance of human limitations and human fallibility is reasonable are guilty of 'life-denial', of nothing less than 'a fierce inveterate Calvinism of the spirit', 'a world-blasting mediaeval Catholicism'. Finally, everybody ought to have faith in man's will to accomplish, 'a conquest of the will that is at best, moreover, wavering and halting'. This conquest of matter does automatically, nevertheless, mean an advance of the 'basic human values, the loyalty, honour, mercy, pride, and respect for personality that could scarcely have thriven in the caves of the men of the Stone Age'.<sup>1</sup>

This series of assertions and judgements is itself an object lesson in the deficiencies of liberalism. The Jeffersonian faith is not properly an end in itself. We may rationally enquire what the direction of man's progress ought to be; but material change, technological evolution, far from being an end in itself, is merely one means that a culture uses to achieve its goal. What that goal is Brooks does not tell us. And the basic human values of his liberalism are merely secondary virtues. Loyalty—but loyalty to what? Honour, mercy, pride—but pride in what? Surely not in the naïve notion that man is the measure of the universe! And if liberalism stands for respect for personality, Brooks has signally failed, in his misleading statements about Eliot, to live up to the code that he so ardently expounds. The virtues of this liberalism are relative, relative to unstated absolutes. If the liberals deprecate metaphysics, indeed, any system of absolutes, they nonetheless live by values that, of themselves meaningless, cannot exist without tacit, implicit reference to absolute and universal ideas.

Liberalism is, in fine, a secular fideism, lacking the perspicuity to acknowledge its dependence on traditional metaphysics.

<sup>1</sup> *The Confident Years*, p. 609.

# TRENDS IN THE POST-WAR SOVIET NOVEL

By F. M. BORRAS<sup>1</sup>

**S**OVIET Literature, by party decree, is at once the herald and instrument of the future Communist State. It is the literature of a society which already claims to be the most advanced on earth and which is still propelling itself towards the terminus of social organization—Communism. Literature is required to add its weight to this forward movement and, at the same time, to reflect it: the literary creed of Socialist Realism has been devised to enable writers to fulfil this double purpose to the best of their individual ability.

Towards the end of 1946, in the face of grave divergence from the party line by two eminent writers, Zhdanov was compelled to reiterate the tenets of Socialist Realism. Since then critics and creative writers have returned constantly to the definition of their creed. From time to time a strict definition has been achieved at the expense of a writer whose work, good literature though it may be, has been taken to show what Socialist Realism is not. Some new writers, however, have won high favour. Prominent among them are Semyon Babaevski and Vasili Azhaev. Babaevski in 1947–48 published *The Knight of the Golden Star* and in 1949–50 its sequel *Light over the Land*; Azhaev in 1948 published *Far from Moscow*. The Russians still follow their nineteenth-century custom of printing new novels by instalments in their literary magazines and issuing a complete edition later.

Successful post-war Soviet novels share the following qualities—‘true’ Realism, ‘true’ Romanticism, an epic quality, and significance as a lesson in practical ethics. Babaevski’s novels contain all these characteristics. Before we can understand his work, however, we must know what official Soviet criticism regards as ‘true’ Realism and ‘true’ Romanticism. Realism means the selection by

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer in Russian literature at Glasgow University.

the writer from real life of elements which are typical of its present state and which at the same time, point towards the Communist future. The definition of Romanticism is more subtle and several Soviet critics, recently, have come to grief in attempting it. Reality is envisaged as a continuous state of movement towards a practical ideal realizable in the near future—Communism. Romanticism must not, therefore, be expressed as a dream of an ideal world inhabited by the noblest of men but antithetically opposed to reality. That was true Romanticism under the Tsarist régime. For the modern Russian novelist, Soviet life provides all the Romanticism he requires, Soviet men and women all the heroism. Private Utopias are forbidden. The peak of contemporary Romanticism is regarded as the adventures of the airman, Mereshev, in Boris Polevoi's *The Story of a Real Man*.

In chaining their writers' imaginations to a strictly defined plan for the future, the Soviets are very probably on their guard against a quality which was at once the strength and weakness of advanced Russian thinkers under the Tsar—the tendency to create a private Utopia of the mind and to live within it until the harsh impact of reality destroyed the dream and, according to temperament, the thinker began the search all over again or lost his sanity. The Soviets claim that by eliminating the gulf between dreams and reality they have also eliminated the need for mental searching which permeates classical Russian literature. They claim also to have made irrelevant for their own people the split personalities who crowd the novels of Dostoievski. This is one reason why Dostoievski's name does not appear in a primer of Russian Literature published in 1949 for the senior forms of schools.

Babaevski's novels are the story of the post-war achievements of a young ex-Tank Corps officer, Sergei Tutarinov, who for his military service is awarded the Gold Star of Hero of the Soviet Union. On his return to his native village, bearing in mind Lenin's words that 'Communism is the power of the Soviets plus electrification of the land', he initiates a project for the erection of an electric power station and organizes the workmen of all the surrounding collective farms to carry it out. He is elected Chairman of the District Executive Committee because the previous chairman had lapsed into complacency and failed to grasp the new tasks of the day. His project is carried through and he is elected Deputy to the Supreme Soviet.

# TRENDS IN THE POST-WAR SOVIET NOVEL

By F. M. BORRAS<sup>1</sup>

SOVIET Literature, by party decree, is at once the herald and instrument of the future Communist State. It is the literature of a society which already claims to be the most advanced on earth and which is still propelling itself towards the terminus of social organization—Communism. Literature is required to add its weight to this forward movement and, at the same time, to reflect it: the literary creed of Socialist Realism has been devised to enable writers to fulfil this double purpose to the best of their individual ability.

Towards the end of 1946, in the face of grave divergence from the party line by two eminent writers, Zhdanov was compelled to reiterate the tenets of Socialist Realism. Since then critics and creative writers have returned constantly to the definition of their creed. From time to time a strict definition has been achieved at the expense of a writer whose work, good literature though it may be, has been taken to show what Socialist Realism is not. Some new writers, however, have won high favour. Prominent among them are Semyon Babaevski and Vasili Azhaev. Babaevski in 1947-48 published *The Knight of the Golden Star* and in 1949-50 its sequel *Light over the Land*; Azhaev in 1948 published *Far from Moscow*. The Russians still follow their nineteenth-century custom of printing new novels by instalments in their literary magazines and issuing a complete edition later.

Successful post-war Soviet novels share the following qualities—‘true’ Realism, ‘true’ Romanticism, an epic quality, and significance as a lesson in practical ethics. Babaevski’s novels contain all these characteristics. Before we can understand his work, however, we must know what official Soviet criticism regards as ‘true’ Realism and ‘true’ Romanticism. Realism means the selection by

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer in Russian literature at Glasgow University.

the writer from real life of elements which are typical of its present state and which at the same time, point towards the Communist future. The definition of Romanticism is more subtle and several Soviet critics, recently, have come to grief in attempting it. Reality is envisaged as a continuous state of movement towards a practical ideal realizable in the near future—Communism. Romanticism must not, therefore, be expressed as a dream of an ideal world inhabited by the noblest of men but antithetically opposed to reality. That was true Romanticism under the Tsarist régime. For the modern Russian novelist, Soviet life provides all the Romanticism he requires, Soviet men and women all the heroism. Private Utopias are forbidden. The peak of contemporary Romanticism is regarded as the adventures of the airman, Mereshev, in Boris Polevoi's *The Story of a Real Man*.

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Tutarinov's progress seems a very ordinary post-war success story, but his path is not free of obstacles which, since he is striving to build Communism, are also obstacles to the Soviet future. It is here that we come upon what the Soviet writer is allowed to use as the source of drama in his novels. He is not required to show the building of Communism as an easy and natural process. He *must* show it as inevitable but retarded at times by human weakness. He may not show difficulties as insurmountable; he may *not* reveal conflicts within the transitional society as irreconcilable. The chief barrier across the high-road to Communism is the survival of capitalist instincts in the consciousness of men and women and the chief source of dramatic conflict for the writer is the struggle between individuals corrupted by these instincts and the collective conscience of society. Society's conscience-keepers, as we shall see later, are the local party secretaries.

Tutarinov, then, is successful but only after winning a victory over Khokhlakov whom he had deposed as Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee. Khokhlakov, as well as being behind the times, is guilty of personal ambition and he attempts for private ends to organize public opinion against his rival. The collective will of the people, however, rejects him and, in the face of collective infallibility, he becomes convinced of his errors. After hours of painful mental strife, he decides to go the next day to the Regional Party Committee and confess himself in the wrong. In the night, however, he dies and is thus prevented from making his confession. Such is the pathos of death in a Stalin prize novel.

There are, in Soviet post-war literature, numerous variations on this theme of the aberration of the individual and his recall by the collective will. In Soviet ideology, society is responsible for every one of its members. The transgressor is very often a senior technician and the concrete form taken by his conflict with society is usually strife between him and the local party secretary. The mass of the people is, of course, represented as supporting the party. Thus in A. Chakovski's novel *Here it is the Dawn*, published in 1949, the point at issue is the organization of winter fishing on the island of South Sakhalin after its reconquest from the Japanese. Winter fishing has never before been practised here and there is a strong body of opinion, led by the chief engineer, which opposes its inception now. They claim that the Japanese never attempted it. 'The Japs are no law for us', replies the party organizer, Nyrkov, and he is supported by the workers.

## TRENDS IN POST-WAR SOVIET NOVEL 57

Thus the vital theme of classical Russian literature—the revolt of the individual against society—is permitted in Soviet Literature but since society is now the supreme good, the conflict must never be left unresolved. During the nineteenth century, frustrated protest against the oppressive Tsarist régime evoked in many sections of society a mood, sometimes of anger, sometimes of despair, which produced in literature embittered radicals or 'superfluous men'; the discontent of these characters was often reflected in the author's own sense of frustration as he deformed his work to ensure its acceptance by the censors. Under the Soviet régime many authors must be suffering in the same way; even the highly-respected Valentin Kataev was forced to change his last work *For the Power of the Soviets* because the party critics condemned the original version. But none of them dare to express frustration even in the indirect ways favoured by Tsarist writers; the Soviet censors are much more efficient, much less gullible, than their predecessors. They know that the unresolved conflicts of nineteenth-century literature finally destroyed the Romanovs and they insist in consequence that, in their literature, what the State considers good must be shown as triumphant over what it condemns. Thus, Soviet literature becomes both edifying and conventional.

The insistence that literature should be moral before all things is, of course, not new either in Russia or the West; but the Soviet Union has gone one step further. In Soviet novels the good not only conquers, it also converts. In *Light over the Land* Khvorastyankin, the Chairman of the collective farm, *Red Cavalryman*, is a braggart who thinks he has nothing more to learn. The party organizer on the farm, Tatyana Netsvetovaya, is distressed at this and suggests to the regional party secretary, Kondratyov, that Khvorastyankin be removed from his post. Kondratyov, however, replies that anyone can dismiss a bad worker but it is much more difficult and worthwhile to turn him into a good one. If the novelist does not show the bad as converted, the critics object. Nor will they tolerate ideological loose ends. Thus, in *Light over the Land*, Khokhlakov has an ally in his dispute with Tutarinov who is an even worse transgressor than himself. This man, Evsei Narezhni, refuses to accept his colleague's plan to confess their errors to the party and, after Khokhlakov's death, simply vanishes from the novel. 'This will not do,' says the critic Platonov, 'such unconverted characters simply do not walk the Soviet land.' In

the novel *The Engineers* published by Mikhail Slominski in 1950 and set in the days before the revolution, the engineer Langovoi is shown as convinced of the need for revolution but relying upon the skilled technicians as its leaders. The working people he would accept only as assistants. He is allowed to leave the novel with this conviction unimpaired and the critics point to this as a marked weakness of the novel. The Soviets do not forget that Peter the Great created the technical intelligentsia as the *servant* of the state.

From what has been said, it may seem that the characters in Soviet novels are black or white but never grey. Here, however, the innate Russian sense of realism comes to the rescue and we find even the best of Soviet people capable of errors. Since, in the party's view, the ordinary citizen looks to the heroes of Soviet fiction for guidance in his daily life, it may be that characters with a trace of imperfection are considered, as models, more palatable to the reader than paragons. In the novel, *Bright Shore* by Vera Panova, published in 1949, the collective farm director, Korostyelov, is shown as an admirable and sympathetic man and citizen. He is, none the less, guilty of the grave offence of selling one of his calves to a war-devastated farm in the Ukraine. That calf was the property of 'the collective'. The farm-workers look askance at the director, and the party secretary Bekishev is obliged to bring home to Korostyelov the enormity of his error. Even the admirable Tutarinov falls into error after constructing his power station. Forgetting that he must then harness the power to production, he falls to admiring the results of his work in the new domestic appliances now available to the local inhabitants. Again the party secretary Kondratyov's services are necessary. A good man has gone wrong and must be corrected.

Two Soviet writers who have made their reputations since the war are of special interest to Western readers since they seem to have won Stalin prizes by sheer good writing although much in their work is not strictly orthodox. These are Emmanuel Kazakevitch and Vera Panova. Kazakevitch has, indeed, been reprimanded for his second story, *Two in the Steppe*, but his last novel, *Spring on the Oder*, retrieved his reputation. He specializes in stories of the war and shows the unmistakable influence of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. This is especially evident in his markedly philosophical approach to the events of war. In his first story, *The Star*, he described war as the 'age-old play in which the characters are two—Man and

Death. Men killed in war are shown as the victims of a tragic fate and' their heroism in the face of destiny is a purely moral quality. The hero, Lieutenant Travkin, is stalked by the image of death from the beginning of the story and its approach to him is emphasized throughout by small, seemingly unconnected incidents. For the Soviet critics, of course, death in battle and courage must be concretely tied up with the Socialist motherland. The hero of *Two in the Steppe*, Lieutenant Ogarkov, is shown as a very young officer who by the machinations of a malignant fate is convicted of cowardice in action and sentenced to be shot. Fate again intervenes before the sentence can be carried out and his unit is overrun by the Germans. His Cossack guard, Dzhurabaev, however, remains with him in their flight across the steppe, resolved to deliver him to justice. In various chance brushes with the enemy, Ogarkov shows great courage and Dzhurabaev is affected with pity for him. Dzhurabaev is killed in an air-raid but Ogarkov, from sense of duty, makes his way back to his unit and gives himself up. The sentence of death is not confirmed by the Military Council and he follows a successful career to the end of the war.

The critics condemned this story because Dzhurabaev, representing Soviet justice in the steppe, allows his severe conception of duty to be tempered by pity for a man who has betrayed military honour. The part of fate in the matter is not important: Soviet man is himself responsible for his actions. Such is his dignity. For the critics Kazakevitch had not shown the true path of the Soviet officer and soldier in war.

To a Western mind *Two in the Steppe* is an excellent story with a particularly strong plot, admirably constructed and written. It shows a sense of form—beginning, middle and end—which is not a common characteristic of even the best Russian literature.

Vera Panova has published three novels since the war, each of which deals with a different aspect of Soviet life. She has probably achieved as nice a balance between the abstract and the tendentious as is possible under the Soviet censorship. She has brought back to Russian literature the theme of frustrated love. Yet each of her novels has won a Stalin prize.

The key to Panova's success is her ability, fully in the tradition of classical Russian literature, to combine personal with social themes. In an article in the *Literary Gazette*, last year, she complained of critics who require novelists to portray only model characters and defended her right to take humanity as she found

it. In her first two novels, *The Train* (1946) and *Kruzhilika* (1947), alongside characters motivated by the 'new' impulses, she had shown others who combined good and bad qualities like any actor in the human comedy. Thus in *The Train* Julia Dmitrievna is a first-class nursing sister but this fact does not prevent her from falling in love with one man after another. When finally her hopes that the unworthy doctor, Supugrov, will marry her, are dashed, she leaves the novel presumably condemned to spinsterhood. We feel for her that most un-Soviet emotion—sympathy.

In her last novel, *Bright Shore*, Panova has so far yielded to the critics as to convert her hero, Korostyelov, through the good offices of the party secretary Bekishev. At the same time, however, she has created the infamous Ikonnikov, a technician on Korostyelov's farm, who works industriously at any task which does not carry responsibility. His display of industry is enough to earn him the regard of the party and he prospers. 'Look out,' the novelist seems to be saying to the party, 'the pious under your new morality are not always what they seem.' Then we have the carpenter Almazov who after his military service returns to his wife and family still in love with his war-time mistress. To make life bearable he takes to that familiar Russian remedy—vodka. True, by an effort of will he stops drinking as abruptly as he began and, in the end, sublimates his love in the exaltation of work. We none the less feel that the unregenerate part of him is the more real.

Contemporary Soviet literature is full of the spirit of Shigalov, the revolutionary conspirator in Dostoevski's *The Possessed* who looks forward to the revolution not at some vague future date but 'tomorrow morning at ten o'clock'. Its dynamic is the forward march to Communism. One is entitled to wonder what will happen if the Utopia is reached, for then of course what is now revolutionary morality would become the norm. We will do well to remember that Russian literature, once awakened, became from the start a protest against accepted standards.

# GRAHAM GREENE AND THE DOUBLE MAN

An Approach to *The End of the Affair*

By NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

IN Graham Greene's work one cannot draw sharp divisions between his novels, 'entertainments', travel books and miscellaneous sketches and essays. They are all part of a piece and throughout them all, in some form or other, runs the theme—pursuit. In his first novel, *The Man Within* (1929), the predicament is stated in clear-cut language: 'A sense of overwhelming desolation passed over him, a wonder whether he would ever know peace from pursuit. . . .' Andrews has betrayed his fellow-smugglers to the Excise Men; he shelters in a girl's house, and she persuades him to turn King's Evidence; he does so—partly because he is in love with her and partly because he wishes to assert his own authority. For his loyalties are divided. His life has been a series of alternations between his higher and lower natures, between his spirit and the flesh. In the words of Sir Thomas Browne: 'There's another man within me that's angry with me'; and it is with this duality in man's nature that Greene has always been concerned.

For instance, one will find this duality reflected in nearly all the authors from whom Greene takes the epigraphs for his books—not only in Sir Thomas Browne, but also in his choice of texts from Dryden, Auden or Edwin Muir; Cardinal Newman or Kingslake; Léon Bloy or Charles Péguy. Certainly were the Greene epigraphs collected and printed separately a most odd, if revealing, midget anthology would result. Yet a careful scrutiny of the authors represented would reveal a common factor. Not all of them might be poets in the strict sense of the term, but in all their prose one would be able to discern the poetic essential of intuition. More: one would discover that they frequently employ juxtapositions and paradoxes so as to be able to play tricks with

time-sequences; to impose supernatural happenings upon natural ones; to present at one and the same instant 'the real world of/Theology and horses.'<sup>1</sup> That last is an Auden phrase and there is, perhaps, a singular aptness about using it here, because there is a poetic and telegraphic concision about it which Greene has struggled to achieve in his own prose. After all it was as a poet that Greene originally broke into print.

Five years before Auden's first book of poems appeared, Blackwells published Greene's one and only book of verse, *Babbling April*. However by 1929 he had turned his attention solely to fiction, since it was in this year that Heinemann brought out *The Man Within*. At the head of the opening chapter there is a passage from Traherne which provides a clue not only to this novel, but to all Greene's books—including his latest, *The End of the Affair* (1951).<sup>2</sup> For the Traherne extract provides, in miniature, as concise a synopsis as one can have of Greene's 1929 view of reality—a view to which all his subsequent writings have gradually lent greater strength. Here is the verse in question:

O ye that stand upon the brink,  
Whom I so near me through the chink  
With wonder see: What faces there,  
Whose feet, whose bodies, do ye wear?  
I my companions see  
In you, another me.  
They seemèd others, but are we;  
Our second selves those shadows be.

In retrospect it is not hard to see how Greene has enlarged upon this conception of reality, this idea of the double man; but judging from his early books alone it would have required more than critical perception to realize just how far he was going to develop this dual conception of reality. For the idea of the double man only comes fully to the fore in the case of the whisky-priest, Scobie and now Bendrix—although there are hints of him in Andrews, Raven, Pinkie and Arthur Rowe.

In the two books which followed fast on the heels of *The Man Within*, *The Name of Action* (1930) and *Rumour at Nightfall* (1931)—both of which the author suppressed later—there is no advance: rather, so far as the expansion of the thought behind them is concerned, there is regress. Indeed, risking a generalization, these

<sup>1</sup> *The Age of Anxiety*, by W. H. Auden, 1948.

<sup>2</sup> Heinemann.

three novels might be most suitably catalogued as 'European Westerns'. Constantly in them men—rather poetically—look down ravines, seeing 'creams of foam' gathering beneath waterfalls, while a romantic—and somewhat poetic—atmosphere is often introduced by playing up 'the love interest' in a way which has its visual equivalent in the love scenes of the pioneer silent films: 'He came close to her and put his hands upon her arms and pulled her close to him.' Again a good many of Greene's early similes are either forced or clichés. Here is an example of a cliché: 'Outside the door patches of fleeting blue sky waved in the rain and desolation like a tattered banner'; and here is an example of a forced simile: 'He tried with heavy steps to climb to her mood of laughter, but found the ledge insecure, the foothold treacherous, the fall too terrifying.' At this stage there was none of that economy of language which has made some of Greene's finest writing seem as if it were as precisely worded as a telegram.

In *The End of the Affair* one can see the fruits of the strict paring away of unnecessary verbiage, for every adjective used in the book makes more exact the meaning intended: there are no verbal ambiguities, no loose strings.<sup>1</sup> Further the background of either a tropical or an asphalt jungle has been abandoned and in its place has been substituted a 'respectable' area of suburbia—Clapham Common. For the most part the action is localized though there are excursions to Golders Green Crematorium, the British Museum Reading Room, Rule's Restaurant and a few other 'respectable' places. At any rate there is no admittance of (or to) a London underworld. On the surface as well the three central characters are eminently 'respectable'. There is Henry Miles, a middle-aged senior Civil Servant, and Sarah his wife (observe—though married ten years, they have no children): there is, too, Maurice Bendrix, a mutual friend who is a fairly successful author; and if I summarize their story it is because, adequate as the summaries have been by the reviewers, certain factors which are crucial to a full understanding of the novel's implications have, I would submit, been missed. The fault has lain with too

<sup>1</sup> There is however one bad failure in characterization—Sarah's mother, Mrs. Bertram, who appears towards the close of the book. Of this failure Bendrix is himself quite aware, arguing that for the novelist there is always one character who is still-born. This is a generalization which applies to all fiction and, indirectly writing at one remove, Greene has made a valuable point that (in an age which believes so much in the self-sufficiency of men unto themselves) deserves the widest hearing. Novelists are fallible and their work, no matter how visionary, because of original sin inevitably to some extent must be imperfect.

close an identification of Bendrix with Greene—though let it be added hastily that most of the reviewers have warned their readers to be on guard against such a linking.

This is Greene's only novel written in the first person. Bendrix who is its narrator is a fairly successful author; but he is second-rate. That does not mean that he is not a conscientious writer or that he does not expend as much energy and care upon his work as a good writer, because he does: in fact often second-rate writers, because they have less talent, have to apply themselves far harder to their work. On the contrary, what I wish to suggest is that Bendrix himself is somewhat second-rate and that precisely that second-rate attraction which he has for the superficial colours his whole account of his relationship with Sarah and her husband; the account is always slightly off balance. Greene is writing at one remove.

Bendrix decides to open his narrative with a picture of Henry Miles 'slanting across the wide river of rain' sweltering down upon Clapham Common on a black, wet January night of 1946. But wait a second. Does Bendrix choose this moment or does this moment choose Bendrix? For in the first paragraph of his narrative one is aware that one has entered the terrain of the double man: writing with a knowledge of past events which a reader cannot have, Bendrix from the start is capable of seeing himself as both the pursuer and the pursued; of seeing himself as both the subject and object of his experiences. Why this is so from the start becomes immediately clear if one turns to the book's epigraph. 'Man has places in his heart,' declared Léon Bloy,<sup>1</sup> 'which do not yet exist, and into them enters suffering in order that they may have existence'; and in *The End of the Affair*, with its juxtapositions of time-sequences, when Bendrix chooses to begin his story those places in the heart of which Bloy speaks have come into existence for him. For in one sense when Bendrix picked up his pen the affair was over; in another, just beginning.

Unknown to Henry, Bendrix has been Sarah's lover. Then suddenly all is over. Henry, unsuspecting that Bendrix has ever been his wife's lover, suggests that her affections have strayed elsewhere; he has toyed—not too seriously albeit—with the idea of

<sup>1</sup> The effect of Bloy on Greene is apparent elsewhere. The last sentence of Bloy's novel, *La Femme Pauvre* (1897), reads: 'She knew at the end there was only one unhappiness, and that is—NOT TO BE ONE OF THE SAINTS.' In *The Power and the Glory* (1940), just before his execution, the whisky-priest also knows that 'at the end there was only one thing that counted—to be a saint'.

using a private detective to track down the third man. Whereupon Bendrix takes up the cue: he decides to exploit Henry's naïveté to satisfy his own curiosity—and hatred. For jealous at being dropped for another, Bendrix believes that if a third man can be found he can turn his venom outwards on Henry. A private detective called Parkis is engaged and the pursuit is on: it also becomes a pursuit down the labyrinthine ways of Bendrix's mind. Enquiries are made: one possible suspect is Richard Smythe, a West London rationalist preacher; another Dunstan, the head of Henry's department at the Ministry. Then the real evidence is found: it is contained in Sarah's private journal.

Book III comprises the journal. Sarah is not seen through Bendrix's eyes any longer for by this device the reader is shown her objectively. Up to now he has seen her subjectively through Bendrix's eyes and now he can have the picture completed. It emerges that she is a woman both repelled and attracted by God since it turns out that it was God who was the lover whom neither Bendrix, Henry nor Parkis could track down. Yet though she desires to love God more than anything else in the world, she also desires Maurice: 'I want Maurice: I want ordinary corrupt human love.' The journal closes on the note: 'Dear God, You know I want to want Your pain, but I don't want it now. Take it away for a while and give it me another time'—a note which is but a variation on St. Augustine's great human cry: 'O God, give me continence, but not yet.'<sup>1</sup> Purposely I should like to stop half way through this summary because having mentioned St. Augustine it reminds me that some debate has already arisen over whether Sarah is intended to be a saint. Recall: the same debate arose over Scobie—another double man, although with the other double man in Greene's fiction, the whisky-priest, the debate could not arise because his death was that of a martyr. Yet with Sarah those who argue for her sainthood have a stronger case than with Scobie because she is definitely connected with what seem miracles to Bendrix, loath as he to admit them; and I mention the word myself with a certain caution. To take the first of these 'miracles'....

During an air-raid Bendrix leaves Sarah in his room to slip down and see if his landlady is in the basement. Half way down the stairs, a flying bomb explodes: for a few minutes, pinioned

<sup>1</sup> There are other echoes from St. Augustine in Sarah's journal, but this is the most pronounced one. (Cf. next footnote.)

beneath a door, Maurice lies unconscious. Then he picks himself up and returns to Sarah; the door is ajar and he stares at her crouched on the floor: 'What are you doing on the floor?' . . . 'Praying' . . . 'Who to?' . . . 'To anything that might exist.' He ticks her off sarcastically: 'It would have been more practical to come downstairs.' But apparently she did—although, pinioned beneath the door, she felt positive that his body was lifeless: 'I knew for certain that you were dead' . . . '[In which case] there wasn't much to pray for then, was there? Except'—as Bendrix goes on to tease her: 'Except a miracle.' She simply answers: 'When you are hopeless enough you can pray for miracles. They happen, don't they, to the poor, and I was poor.' This is Bendrix's verbatim account. Here, in contrast, is Sarah's—taken from her journal:

He hadn't been gone two minutes when there was an explosion in the street. . . . I didn't see Maurice at first, and then I saw his arm coming out from under the door. I touched his hand: I could have sworn it was a dead hand. When two people have loved each other, they can't disguise a lack of tenderness in a kiss, and wouldn't I have recognized life if there was any of it left in touching his hand. I knew that if I took his hand and pulled it towards me, it would come away, all by itself from under the door. Now, of course, I know that this was hysteria. I was cheated. He wasn't dead.

Yet when she returned to his room, she knelt down. She prayed: 'Dear God . . . make me believe. I can't believe. Make me. . . . I'm a bitch and a fake and I hate myself. I can't do anything of myself. *Make* me believe.'<sup>1</sup> Then, a moment later, she continues: 'Let him be alive, and I *will* believe. Give him a chance. Let him have his happiness. Do this and I'll believe.' So far Maurice has not stirred. She says, another moment later, very slowly: 'I'll give him up for ever, only let him be alive with a chance'; and, as Maurice walks in, she thinks: 'now the agony of being without him starts,' and she wishes that he was safely back dead under the door. Miracle or hysteria—that is the question. Sarah's journal has a hint that it was possibly the latter, for looking back on the incident she states: 'Now, of course, I know that this was hysteria.' The word 'hysteria' is hers whilst that of 'miracle' is first suggested

<sup>1</sup> Michael de la Bédoyère referring to the phrase 'I'm a bitch and a fake and I hate myself' has suggested that this represents a new and more lively way of saying 'I am a miserable sinner'. In a sense and within its context Sarah's condemnation of herself once again echoes, though rather more faintly this time, some of St. Augustine's own self-condemnatory cries in the *Confessions*.

by Bendrix—which is an odd juxtaposition of their attitudes, as the second half of the book shows. Anyhow, at this period, for both of them the incident of the flying bomb remains a tantalizing open question. Greene continues to write at one remove.

So much for the first miracle, though, as I say, I use the word with some misgiving; for it is Bendrix who has first suggested it. Now, to hark back to my summary. . . .

Sarah dies of a cold and shortly afterwards Henry asks Bendrix to share his house with him: in the meantime he wants Bendrix to help him with the funeral arrangements. 'It's been an awful day, Bendrix. You know, I've never had death to deal with. I always assumed I'd die first—and Sarah would have known what to do. If she'd stayed with me that long. In a way it's a woman's job—like having a baby.' So, with the helplessness which affects men on these occasions, they plan the funeral arrangements together. Smythe, the rationalist preacher, calls and asks to see Sarah. Grudgingly, Bendrix consents; but before he goes to see her laid-out in the room above, he begs Bendrix to do something for her. 'Let her have her Catholic funeral. She would have liked that.' Besides, 'It always pays to be generous [to the dead].' For, according to Smythe, just before she died she had gone to see about being 'instructed'. A few minutes later when Smythe returns to the room, Bendrix notices that his right hand is clenched: it contains a lock of Sarah's hair . . . and Bendrix now sees her as a body, 'a piece of refuse waiting to be cleared away: if you needed a bit of her hair you could take it, or trim her nails if nail trimmings had value to you. Like a saint's her bones could be divided up—if anybody required them. She was going to be burnt soon, so why shouldn't everybody have what he wanted first?' But the outburst subsides for the time being; on returning to his room on the other side of the Common he finds a letter from Sarah. She had written it to him before she died, but had mis-addressed it—and hence the postal delay. In it she tells Maurice that she has been to see a priest to consider being 'instructed' and to see if she could have an annulment. His replies come to her like *cul-de-sacs* where she had thought lay avenues of hope. Her Registry Office marriage with Henry *does* count. 'No, no, no,' [the priest] said, 'I couldn't marry you, not if I was going to be a Catholic.' So one half of Bendrix is satisfied; physically the affair is over and from a material point of view all is ended as a love story; it is the ideal point for the professional writer to close his

tale. However, 'there's another man within me that's angry with me'; there are those inner voices which aggravate the outer conflicts—'our second selves' of which Traherne spoke. Bendrix knows that it would be false to bring down the curtain here; he is a pessimist, with an awareness, if not an acceptance, of the knowledge that Hell lay about him in his infancy; his vision of the world is of a battlefield—not a rose-and-water utopia where peace reigns. As one can have a 'phoney' war (and Bendrix had lived through part of one as a civilian) one can have a 'phoney' peace—inside and out; and to have cut short his tale at this point would have only given Bendrix a 'phoney' peace of mind. It would have meant too a 'phoney' account of the affair. For he is like a man being pursued; he cannot turn back, but must go on.<sup>1</sup> Once he had picked up his pen, all other courses became denied to him: an irrevocable decision had been made.

Artistically, what follows could conceivably be called an epilogue—though I myself believe that to accept the remaining chapters in this light is to miss the main purpose of the book. They conclude nothing, and if they answer some questions then it is only to ask more. The affair is not over nor has Bendrix's love gone sourly dead. His love which at the end—though against his will—has been a forced chaste love is beginning to bear fruit; it has not been without rhyme or reason. Now of this effect Bendrix is quite aware and in his heart of hearts is prepared to admit it; but resentment and bitterness are still there. Suffering may have brought new places into existence in his heart, but his passions have not been fully cleansed: he remains a double man, and concupiscence is always daggering him. For when Bendrix originally became interested in Sarah it was because he wanted to study a senior Civil Servant first-hand for a short story and he had thought the easiest way to 'get the copy' was through such a man's wife. This admitted and the affair having worked itself out as it did, Bendrix finds it disturbing to discover that it has repercussions. Those repercussions are the cure of a patch on Smythe's cheek by the application of Sarah's lock of hair and the cure of Parkis's son by what to the boy—if he was grown and educated up enough to know the phrase—could only be described as the divine intervention of Mrs. Miles. (The private detective and his boy had

<sup>1</sup> One recalls the Dryden epigraph from *The Power and the Glory*:

Th' inclosure narrow'd; the sagacious power  
Of hounds and death drew nearer every hour.

always had much more than a mere sneaking regard for her.) These are spectacular cures and although publicly Bendrix is not prepared to admit that they are miracles—he fobs off enquirers with half-truths about them—it is also quite apparent that he really does more than half believe that they are miracles. His talk to Henry about coincidences such as seeing 'two cars with the same figures side by side in a traffic block' despite 'ten thousand possible numbers and God knows how many combinations' is pure bluff.

That Greene has been able thus to present the double man in Bendrix is some indication of his versatility as a craftsman; but behind this achievement there lies yet a greater. The two miracles in the second half of the book of which the most are made are exactly those two which contain that superficial element which would appeal to the second-rate in Bendrix; and, for sure, as he himself a quarter thinks the cures may have been largely a case of cured hysteria.<sup>1</sup> Remember that Greene is not to be identified with Bendrix for this is fiction reported at one remove and, remembering this, look behind Bendrix's narrative, see it at two removes, and one will notice how cunningly the double man has been brought out in Bendrix. For within Bendrix's narrative there are two kinds of miracle which pass by almost without comment. One of them occurs at Golders Green Crematorium when Bendrix having met a young girl in corduroy slacks decides that he will seduce her that night (concupiscence is still daggering him): then subsequently after the service he thinks better of it; prays to Sarah for help. Suddenly Sarah's mother turns up; she has come to London for the cremation and Bendrix excuses himself to Sylvia on the ground that he must dine with Mrs. Bertram; an alibi has been provided. At the time the incident makes little mark upon Bendrix—although he does refer to it once in passing in the last chapter; but it never, like the cured cheek, takes a foremost place in his memory. The other kind of miracle receives no comment whatever. It occurs in Sarah's journal. In it she relates how on the day that she decides to go off with Maurice—having written a farewell letter to her husband—fate or coincidence brings Henry in half an hour earlier than usual; he has a dreadful headache and just as Smythe's patch on his cheek awoke Sarah's

<sup>1</sup> "I'm not sure. I've read somewhere these marks are hysterical in origin. A mixture of psychiatry and radium." It sounded plausible . . . But at rock-bottom there is more doubt than certainty in Bendrix's mind about the plausibility of his reasoning.

pity, so Henry's premature return prevents her from being cruel enough to give him the letter directly; and because she cannot give him the letter directly, the delay makes the moment of giving it impossible. Her pity awakened to its fullest, she sees poor Henry as 'one of misery's graduates'—to use a term coined previously by Bendrix.

In the case of Mrs. Bertram's appearance at the cremation service and Henry's headache, I have used the words 'alibi', 'fate' and 'coincidence' because it is by such words that outwardly Bendrix explains such natural happenings; but in his writing, as opposed to his conversation, his defences go down.

There one sees the real conflict and how easily and often a man thinking he is feeling or acting from one set of motives is in actual fact feeling and acting from quite another set of motives. For each creature is a person at war with themselves—and none more so than either Bendrix or Sarah. As, alternatively, they pursue each other, so each of them is pursued inwardly: down the arches of the years and down the labyrinthine ways of their own minds. At one remove Greene has once more suggested how pursuit can become a means to salvation.

At the age of two it transpires that Sarah was baptized a Catholic, though she never knew of this herself. However, her mother when she had had her baptized hoped that in some manner it might 'take' like an injection and in her journal Sarah confesses that she has caught faith 'like a disease'. This somewhat clinical imagery is the counterpart of the idea of faith acting like 'a twitch upon the thread' as it does in some of the novels of Maurice Baring and Evelyn Waugh. Yet Greene's more clinical imagery is probably better suited to a time which puts such trust in medicine as the curer of all physical and mental evils because it draws attention to the need for spiritual cures; at present when medicine makes bigger steps every day towards the abolishment of disease, it puts a check upon the belief now current that the only ills are physical and mental ones. *The End of the Affair* brings home most forcibly this point in the way that it shows neither physical nor mental palliatives are enough to restore full harmony, to unite the double man. Physical and mental palliatives do not balance out, but must be drawn up and sublimated by the spirit so that they may become, as it were, the bases of a triangle. This is baldly stated and Greene is far too much of an artist to make such dogmatic assertions in his fiction: rather, they appear as the natural

corollaries from reading his books, especially his later ones. For in *The End of the Affair* Bendrix and Sarah in their pursuit are driven to look into themselves and to recognize—if only for a flash—in Whose Image they have been made. Which is why here, as in the rest of the Greene canon, pursuit for his characters so often becomes their means to salvation.

I have said that Greene is too much of an artist to make dogmatic theological assertions and though this is true of all his books, with the possible exception of *Brighton Rock* (1938),<sup>1</sup> one notices that the shadow of Newman's works lies heavily over those of Greene. Their point of departure is the same, and the three epigraphs which precede his travel book, *The Lawless Roads* (1939), include one from Cardinal Newman—the other two being picked from *Wit's Recreations* (1640) and Edwin Muir's poems. The passage from the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1865) is worth quoting in full because it crystallizes Greene's attitude to men in a fallen world—an attitude of which in his reminiscences of his 'lost childhood' one catches hints.

To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and requirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken, of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers of truth, the progress of things, as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'having no hope, and without God in the world—all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the

<sup>1</sup> In *Brighton Rock* there is a tendency for Greene to let the characters become archetypes of good and evil, right and wrong. If Pinkie and his girl Rose stand for good and evil, Ida, the cockney down from London, and her friend the detective stand for right and wrong: one feels that they are untroubled by sin, being interested simply in the 'straight deal' and justice. They stand for law and order—that law and order of which the police are the custodians. In contrast, Pinkie and Rose see their actions leading to either Heaven or Hell, salvation or damnation: they know that, even if they escape the police, they cannot escape God. This division appears inevitable in the construction of the plot, but its inevitability leads to a certain falsification in the novel as a work of art: it makes for a form of Catholic discrimination amongst the various characters which is nowhere apparent in any other of his novels or 'entertainments'.

sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.

What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from His presence . . . If there be a God, since there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity.

Yet before Greene had even read Newman, he had as a boy read—‘perhaps I was fourteen at the time’—Marjorie Bowen’s *Viper of Milan* (1917), and that had crystallized once and for all his vision of men in a fallen world. ‘At the end of *The Viper of Milan*’, he recalled in a broadcast talk in 1947,<sup>1</sup> the great scene of ‘complete success’ when

della Scala is dead, Ferrara, Verona, Novara, Mantua have all fallen . . . Visconti sits and jokes in the wine light. I was not on the classical side or I would have discovered, I suppose, in Greek literature instead of in Miss Bowen’s novel, the sense of doom that lies over success—the feeling that the pendulum is about to swing. That too made sense; one looked around and saw the doomed everywhere—the champion runner who would one day sag over the tape; the head of the school who would atone, poor devil, during forty dreary undistinguished years . . . Anyway she had given me my pattern—religion might later explain it to me in other terms, but the pattern was already there—perfect evil walking the world where perfect good can never walk again, and only the pendulum ensures that after all in the end justice will be done.

Newman’s tokens, ‘so faint and broken, of a superintending design’ were easy for Greene to accept because ‘the pattern was already there’. His entry into the Catholic Church in 1926 was simply a religious confirmation of the fact. So it is that time and again in his dialogue one has the impression that it is as if he had translated Newman’s ideas and thoughts into the language which his own characters would use were such thoughts and ideas to occur to them. There is no loss of spontaneity in the effect nor note of religious propaganda because in their contexts both ideas and thoughts appear logical enough. Indeed it is as if the dialogue were infused with a natural theology of its own<sup>2</sup> so that through-

<sup>1</sup> The talk was entitled ‘Heroes are Made in Childhood’ and was reprinted in *The Listener*, 27 March, 1947: it has subsequently been incorporated in Greene’s book *The Lost Childhood and Other Essays* (1951).

<sup>2</sup> Henry James drew upon psychological introspection for much of his best character-drawing and with L. H. Myers and E. M. Forster came into being what Maud Bodkin has christened the ‘philosophic novel’. With Greene it has been whispered—

out Greeneland—be it the tropical or asphalt jungle or, as it is now, 'respectable' suburbia going seedy—his picture of men in a fallen world is not a pessimistic one, even though Hell may lie about those men's infancies. For continually one discovers the hint projected through his characters that despair is not the final ending—even in Bendrix's prayer which served so well his wintry mood after Sarah's death: 'O God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough, I'm too tired and old to learn to love, leave me alone for ever.' But as Greene's chaplain says in *It's a Battlefield* (1934), despair can never be the final ending because 'one can't hand in a resignation to God'.

notably on the Continent—that the advent of the 'theological novel' has come. I am distrustful. The grouping of fiction into such compartments tends to destroy a wholeness of vision in which 'the real world of/Theology and horses' may be seen as different parts of one and the same universe. Greene is first and foremost a novelist with a number of stories to tell, and in those stories it is true that a number of theological points arise; but they arise in an untheological way. The implications are left to others to unravel—in the way for example that political speeches on atomic warfare also sometimes raise problems for the theologians to unravel. In *The End of the Affair* Smythe, the West London rationalist preacher is disturbed by the power of Christianity. He feels that every denial of it is only a stronger affirmation of its power to survive in the Western World so that one cannot even say 'good-bye' to anyone without, consciously or unconsciously, saying 'God be with you'. Now this is a novelist's observation, lending itself to the thought that since 'between the stirrup and the ground there's often mercy found' many rationalists and unbelievers may discover, having unwittingly invoked God's protection of their friends, that at the last in His infinite mercy He will be with them. Yet Greene does not develop the thought thus far, but merely hints at it. What theological implications there are in it is left for others to unravel: his function as Smythe's creator is simply to think as Smythe would—nothing more.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### MYSTICISM

*The Ascent to Truth.* By Thomas Merton. (Hollis & Carter. 18s.)

THIS important book is the complement of the author's *Seeds of Contemplation*. All readers of the latter book should read this. Only when taken together do they present an adequate and balanced statement of Fr. Merton's spiritual doctrine. To know only one is to have a one-sided view of it. And its exceptional value to all concerned, whether theoretically or practically, with experimental and contemplative religion, will hardly be questioned by those acquainted with his work.

*Seeds of Contemplation* was primarily descriptive. The writer was concerned to relate an experience of mystical union with God, whether actually his own or known by an intuitive connatural sympathy with the supreme experiences of union with God described by the great masters of Christian mysticism. In these exalted regions language coined for lowlier needs is pitifully inadequate. It is not, therefore, surprising that, in a few passages, Fr. Merton permitted himself words liable to misunderstanding by readers who may lose sight of their context and of its implications.

In the present volume he is concerned to elaborate the theological background and interpretation of Catholic mysticism, and to do this as a disciple of St. John of the Cross and, indirectly, of St. Thomas. For he is concerned to bring out St. John's Thomism. Indeed, he has perhaps even exaggerated his Thomism. In sixteenth-century Carmelite schools, St. Thomas did not reign alone. He at least divided his authority with the fourteenth-century English Carmelite, Baconthorpe.

For this theological exposition, Fr. Merton sacrifices the superb and breathtaking *élan* of his former work, its daring flights in the stratosphere of contemplation. But he had no need to repeat what had been said so magnificently. What was needed, and is here supplied, was an adequate conceptual and theological setting for the experiences already described. For this reason, as we have said, both books are complementary and throw light on each other.

And when all is said, through the theological and philosophical

exposition there flows the electric current of descriptive mystical experience warming its dry light.

So perfect is the union of Love that the soul actually lives and acts in its substance and in its faculties by the life and activity of God, and feels itself, as it were, 'transformed' into God, so that there remains no apparent distinction between itself and God. This does not imply a destruction of the human substance or personality . . . Although the expression would be philosophical nonsense, one may say that the saint 'transformed' in God acts as though he were a part of God . . . God is . . . the sanctity of the saints and their contemplation and their life. . . . Love, which transports the soul into the darkness beyond faith, unites our being to the Being of God in such a way that we seem to be annihilated and to vanish out of existence, so that nothing remains but the power and the glory of God.

Evidently Fr. Merton is speaking of the same summit of prayer of which he spoke in the final pages of his previous book. But 'apparent' and 'seem', and the explicit statement that personality in fact survives, show his care to safeguard his meaning against any possible misunderstanding.

In fact, the theme of this book is not so much an account of the way of contemplation, though this is a secondary subject, as to study the relation between the experience of the contemplative and the dogmatic truth taught and guaranteed by the Church, in particular, what is the relation between faith in the propositions about God which the Church proposes to our belief and the mystic's faith in a God experienced as transcending concepts, and the subject, therefore, of what seems a dark and negative knowledge, though, in fact, it is ultrapositive. We do not know of any treatment of this problem, which mystics and mystical theologians are apt to by-pass as though the answer could be taken for granted, so clear and so satisfying as Fr. Merton's in this book. True, he bases it on the teaching of St. John of the Cross, but he has made explicit and brought to a focus what in the Saint's writings is largely implicit and scattered. And St. Thomas is throughout employed to elucidate St. John.

It is not easy even to indicate the solution presented in these pages, which must be carefully read and more than once. Roughly, the relation between conceptual dogmas and mystical faith in the transcendent God is that the former are true propositions about God and to be believed as such by supernatural faith, but cannot tell us what the God is of whom they are true, whereas the latter knows that He is by an experience exceeding conceptual understanding. St. John, quoted by Fr. Merton (pp. 196-97), compares conceptual dogmas to reliable information about a strange animal which cannot be seen or imagined.

The rôle which is, or should be, played by reason throughout the

mystical way of a contemplation which exceeds but never supersedes it is admirably studied. The meaning and inevitability of St. John's demand for the complete mortification of desire are explained so clearly that it should no longer be the 'terror and scandal' it has been to many Christians. How grateful the reviewer would have been for *The Ascent to Truth* when he first made acquaintance, unprepared, with *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

Among such wealth of wisdom we would invite special attention to the study of modern unbelief, shown to be, in the case of the majority, an irrational mistiness and muddle which are the reverse of a mysticism which is, at the same time, solidly rational. On the other hand, the reader should not lose sight of the unbelief of an influential minority, which is a rational deduction from an arbitrary assumption, the assumption that the only certain knowledge is of the scientific type.

The very value we set on this book invites us to mention a few points where we must differ from the writer's opinion. We do not think meditation the sole path to contemplation. Vocal prayer, if made progressively a vehicle for what Fr. Baker calls forced acts, is surely an alternative approach. In short, vocal prayer may become contemplative. Nor can we agree that all infused contemplation is passive. Fr. Baker taught, by implication at least, that normal contemplation, however exalted, is active and infused, and we are of his opinion. St. Teresa, it is true, insists on devotion to the Sacred Humanity in all stages and states of prayer. But similar statements in earlier editions of St. John of the Cross were interpolated, and *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Fr. Baker are of the contrary opinion, which seems indeed to be the meaning of the traditional formula *per Christum hominem ad Christum Deum*. Surely this is a matter of individual *attract* and vocation, and as such should be left open.

We agree with Fr. Merton that there is a purely natural 'metaphysical intuition of being' communicated from God to all beings. Presumably, the mystical experience of a Tennyson, and of many oriental contemplatives, was of this kind. But we cannot agree with him that an intuition which he himself ranks higher, 'the intuitive appreciation of the Absolute Being of God', is also natural. Direct intuition of God as transcendent of creatures is, in our opinion, supernatural.

Though the body is certainly not merely the soul's prison, for it is also, even now, an instrument of its spiritual activities, insofar as the spirit is soul of its body, that is to say, is its biological life principle, it is, in truth, its confinement. Fr. Merton, we think, has failed to distinguish the twofold relationship at present obtaining between the human spirit and the body. Like many spiritual writers, he (p. 145) does not seem to recognize sufficiently the position of the middle values, above the satisfaction of sense but below religious values, aesthetic and scientific values, for example.

Prejudice is not always the fruit of inordinate desire (p. 42). It is often the result of ignorance or limited understanding.

The treatise *De Adherendo Deo* is not as here stated (p. 212) the work of St. Albert but of John of Castello. 'Never' (p. 220, line 3 from bottom) is a misprint for 'even'. Since, however, as Fr. Merton tells us, God Himself finally becomes the contemplation of God, contemplation must surely become an end in itself, being identical with God.

E. I. WATKIN

### THE PROBLEM OF LEISURE

*Leisure the Basis of Culture*. By Dr. Josef Pieper. Translated by Alexander Dru, with an introduction by T. S. Eliot. (Faber & Faber. 10s. 6d.)

It should prove fortunate for Dr. Pieper's further reputation in England that he makes his first appearance with a book that discusses work and leisure. England can claim to have started this discussion. The English industrial revolution gave rise to modern work conditions and the English Liberal conscience prompted the first utterances of disquiet. But the book will encounter prejudice among English readers as it deals with the problem in a way that is alien to the English outlook. England first of all saw the situation economically and nowdays we consider it in terms that we call sociological; but at no stage have we seriously posed the problem of leisure itself. The discussion in England about leisure turns upon questions of how to fill spare time with various forms of self-improving or recreational activity. Phrases such as 'leisure occupation' or 'leisure activities' are used as headings by those who are ready with advice. There is a corner kept apart for the higher recreational activities such as art, literature and music, but these are thought of as higher in scale rather than as different. Dr. Pieper is not concerned with the spiritual ascent from a week-end at Mr. Butlin's camp to an evening at Glyndebourne; he is not concerned with higher or lower in the terrestrial order; he is concerned with the transcendent, and he relates leisure to contemplation and to what he terms 'cultus'. In this presentation of the matter he cannot fail to make enemies, as neither of these conceptions are congenial to the English mind. 'Cultus' is alien to what has become the typically English religious habit and contemplation is degraded to musing by the fireside.

England was very troubled in the 1850s about the world of 'total work', to use Dr. Pieper's phrase, which our industrial expansion had brought about for the labouring classes. A century later this world of 'total work' threatens to engulf everyone. One of the most significant failures of the nineteenth century was that of F. D. Maurice to establish the ameliorative programme of Christian socialism upon the basis of the Christian religion. No sooner did he declare that his primary concern was with a kingdom not of this world than his adherents broke

away and the main impulse of his effort became dispersed into educational schemes and into the main stream of the Co-operative Movement. These elements have provided the setting in which we have elaborated the discussion of work and leisure in continued estrangement from the world of religious realities. This estrangement has brought impoverishment and, as Dr. Pieper would say, a falsity to our notion of leisure; it has brought too a distortion, if the connexion of leisure with 'cultus' is allowed, to our notion of culture. For Dr. Pieper argues that culture springs from 'cult' and is naturally related to religious practice. In this he shows affinity with suggestions made by Mr. Eliot in his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. In explaining his view of the identification of religion and culture (elsewhere he discusses their difference) Mr. Eliot remarks:

Taking now the point of view of identification, the reader must remind himself as the author has constantly to do, of how much is here embraced by the term *culture*. It includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar. The reader can make his own list. And then we have to face the strange idea that what is part of our culture is also a part of our *lived religion*.

This illustrates in English terms what is for Dr. Pieper an important quality of leisure—the quality of celebration. 'It is because leisure takes its origin from "celebration" that it is not only effortless but the direct contrary of effort; not just the negative, in the sense of being no effort, but the positive counterpart.' It is necessary to explain that the words 'celebration' and 'feast' are used by Dr. Pieper in their fullest sense, including their ancient religious associations. 'There is no such thing as a feast "without gods"', he writes. Earlier he has used the phrase 'contemplative celebration'; and he explains: 'It is leisure which leads man to accept the reality of the creation and thus to celebrate it, resting on the inner vision that accompanies it.' Dr. Pieper gives an historical account of this conception of leisure to show that it has been an essential part of Western culture until modern times. But he points out that it is by no means certain that we will preserve the essential elements of this culture. He disengages the idea of 'total work' (which includes most of what we call leisure) from the Communist condition on the one hand and from the managerial world of the U.S.A. on the other. He shows that the supremacy of the useful threatens to pervade all human consciousness so that the non-utile is regarded simply and without question as so much waste. He forcibly illustrates this threat by a discussion of the phrase 'intellectual worker', which has become established by the

belief that the sphere of the intellect itself should be equated with other branches of human work, and we are reminded of J.-P. Sartre's manifesto in which literature is proclaimed a 'social function' and that the writer must learn to regard himself as a 'worker who receives the reward of his effort'. In the second part of this book, called the Philosophical Act, Dr. Pieper describes the degradation for philosophy which must be brought about by the insistence that the philosopher is an 'intellectual worker' in the Sartrian sense. 'He restores to their position in philosophy,' Mr. Eliot writes of Dr. Pieper in his introduction, 'what common sense obstinately tells us ought to be found there: *insight* and *wisdom*'. But in so doing Dr. Pieper declares his acceptance of a dogmatic theology, and he thus must collide with the vigorous developments of philosophy in this country whose position excludes theistic preconceptions. But for those whose sympathies lie elsewhere than with logical positivism or with the idealist survival, this part of the book is likely to provide material for an illuminating definition of the aims and scope of philosophy itself, and of philosophy's relation to theology. It is perhaps a weakness in the book that its second more strictly philosophical part is not more securely connected with the theme of the first section where the relations between 'cultus' and leisure are very strongly brought out. It is to be hoped that the author and publisher will provide a more thorough treatment of the relation between philosophy and leisure, and of the connexions between philosophy and culture. Dr. Pieper's book has here been discussed largely in terms of English antipathies, but this should be a recommendation to those who are not content to be limited by them. Dr. Pieper himself seems singularly untrammelled by the typically Germanic limitations, and Mr. Dru has rendered the original into a luminous and pointed English which is as pleasant to read as Mr. Eliot's introduction.

The effect of this volume should be to continue and widen the critical appreciation of our cultural predicament which has been exposed by Mr. Eliot in his own Essay and by Mr. Dawson's Gifford lectures.

HARMAN GRISWOOD

#### THE REIGN OF CHARLES I

*The Age of Charles I.* By David Mathew. (Eyre & Spottiswoode. 18s.)

THIS always interesting and frequently illuminating book provides a sequel to Dr. Mathew's notable *Jacobean Age* and reinforces much of his Ford Lecture of 1945. Its purpose is to provide a survey of the years of Charles I's personal rule when, with his parliament firmly placed on the shelf, the King and his advisers set themselves to their task. The author proposes to follow this volume with another in which he will consider the circumstances which brought about the Great Rebellion.

Of special value are the chapters which deal with the contacts which Englishmen possessed with the Continent, and the extent and nature of these is skilfully conveyed; the assessment of the King's personality and that of his Queen; and the leaders of the Church of England and its position in the country. The King appears as pre-eminently the conserver of the political forces which he had inherited from the Elizabethan past, and as curiously incapable of understanding the new elements in a situation which, so far as he was concerned, was changing for the worse. Particularly convincing is the author's explanation of the King's 'ingratitude'. 'No great reward could surely be expected for the fulfilment of a simple duty.' And, again: 'that great position which he held from God did not permit him to have supporters'. There could be no 'King's Friends' in Charles I's England.

Generally speaking, the epoch is presented as the first spring of the Augustan age rather than the Indian Summer of the age of Elizabeth.

The eighth chapter, 'The Puritan Element', is also noteworthy. It is here that Dr. Mathew's method of approach, tentative yet assured, seeking always for comprehension, is particularly effective. There are so few historians who can resist the temptation to freeze a vital impression into a rigid formula, and Puritanism is particularly ill-suited to the precipitate formula. Yet one wonders whether a really satisfactory analysis of Caroline Puritanism can be achieved which is not integrated with the decrees of the Synod of Dort. After all, the Puritans were for the most part essentially theological. They saw themselves, not always without reason, as engaged in that most crucial of all battles, the defence of Augustinianism against Pelagianism.

Apart from this, the assessment of the elements which came to be arrayed in opposition to 'Thorough' is admirably done. It will be interesting to see if the Fitzwilliam Papers involve any revision of Dr. Mathew's estimate of Strafford. One may hazard a guess that this is unlikely.

A few minor and unrelated points may repay comment. To begin with, it was Pool Quay, surely, rather than Shrewsbury (p. 155) which was in fact the head of the navigation of the River Severn in the seventeenth century. It was partly this reason which made it a convenient centre of Recusancy, for it provided a reasonably assured economic background to the oratory whose confessional was still to be seen in the village some twenty years ago. Across the river, Buttington Hall was in Catholic hands; and the broad influence of Powys Castle, together with the geographical position of the settlement, gave to this colony of 'displaced persons' a fair measure of protection from such unsympathetic centres as Oswestry and Wem.

Then, again, one senses at times the implication that when we have examined the politically significant classes, together with those sections

of life which have left documentary evidence, we are at a standstill. The truth is that all the evidence suggests that the patterns of life and thought which became explicit among the 'documented classes' were implicit throughout the great strata of society. The valid distinction is, in fact, not between economic classes but, as Mr. G. M. Young has acutely remarked of Victorian England, between the respectable and those who were not respectable. Those two intelligent foreigners, Marx and Disraeli, were fundamentally mistaken even over nineteenth-century England: rural English society in the seventeenth century was in essentials far more of a piece than can easily be grasped today. It was not homogeneous but it was united. This point would, perhaps, have been worthwhile stressing in view of the often rather tiresome attempts which have been made during the last decade or so to interpret what evidence we have from a semi-Marxist point of view.

Dr. Mathew's talent for assessing the significant detail comes out particularly well in his chapter on the Universities. For instance, 'the men who joined the high tables at this time formed the first generation on whom the Authorized Version had set its stamp in childhood. There was already present this united bond between all Englishmen of the Reformed tradition who belonged to the literate classes. A world of metaphor was common to them . . . none need be excluded from this country except the Papist.' At the same time, the quotation from Chillingworth which illustrates the point suggests familiarity not so much with the Authorized Version as with the *Book of Common Prayer*, for the allusion is to the fiftieth Psalm.

The picture of the situation as it existed at Peterhouse is brilliantly conceived, but in view of the unsympathetic standpoint which Father Gerrard had felt it necessary to maintain towards Dr. Perne, it may be suggested that, in their reactions to 'the eirenic peace' of this foundation, the Puritans and the more precise wing of the Recusants were birds of a feather.

It would have been of advantage if the author had been able to develop in a separate chapter his acute observation that 'the more expensive form of education for the English countryman of means was now coming into fashion. . . . Winchester was already favoured by the bureaucratic world.' An interesting comparison might have been drawn between the Westminster to which Busby succeeded and, say, a school such as Shrewsbury (Camden's *totius Angliae numerosissima*), which clearly owed so much both to the Council of the Marches and that tradition of Church and State, embattled and interlocked, which the Tudors had bequeathed to England. There is that delightful and illuminating impression of life at Westminster in Mathew Henry's life of his father, certain aspects of which suggest not so much the epoch of the Great Rebellion as that of Tom Brown. To what extent, one wonders, would the impression stand up to analysis? And, again,

Thomas Chaloner and Dr. Kennedy, one feels, would have had a surprising amount in common.

The book sharpens one's appetite for Dr. Mathew's next volume.

T. CHARLES EDWARDS

### THE WELSH RECUSANTS

*Cymru a'r Hen Ffydd.* By Emyr Gwynne Jones. (Welsh University Press. 7s. 6d.)

It is ironical that up to now the history of Welsh recusancy has been principally considered as important for an understanding of the state of the English Catholics on the Continent. Owen Lewis, Bishop of Cassano; Gruffydd Robert, canon of Milan and confessor to St. Charles Borromeo; Morys Clynnog, rector of the English College in Rome: these are some of the principal Welsh refugees under Elizabeth, and their work is sufficiently known. Llewellyn Williams, in his *Making of Modern Wales*, indicated more than thirty years ago the interest of the material that might be available, and Archbishop David Mathew's *Celtic Peoples and Renaissance Europe*, together with Professor David Williams's recent *History of Modern Wales*, did some justice to the fidelity of the Catholics who remained in Wales. The evidence indeed is scattered and its significance difficult to determine. Now for the first time the Librarian of Bangor University College has brought together much important material, has analysed what figures are available, and has provided a valuable basis for judgement on the effect of Elizabethan and later policy on the religious allegiance of the people of Wales.

Mr. Jones's book contains three Welsh lectures which he delivered at Bangor in 1950, and his method is for the most part a consideration of the various visitations and reports submitted by the Bishops of the Establishment, beginning with those of 1577 and ending with the religious census of 1676. It is scarcely necessary to insist on the initial indifference of the Welsh people as a whole to the Elizabethan settlement. In 1567 Nicholas Robinson, Bishop of Bangor, had reported to Cecil that 'touching the Welsh people's receiving of the Gospel, I find by my small experience among them that ignorance continueth many in the dregs of superstition', and in 1570 he informs the Privy Council that he has stamped out some evidence of 'fond superstition' in Beaumaris, 'against the which I travail, and through the grace of God profit'.

The report of 1577 notes one Catholic only in the diocese of Bangor, none at all in St. Asaph, one in St. Davids and thirteen in Llandaff (eleven of whom were from Monmouthshire, which throughout was to remain the most Catholic part of Wales). These figures can bear very little resemblance to the facts. In 1581, the year that saw the sending of the first Jesuit missionaries to Britain, the penal laws were immensely extended, and from now on the numbers of recorded Welsh Catholics

continue to grow. In 1582 Robinson reports six Catholics 'that withdraw themselves from the church' in his diocese; the next year his figure is eleven. The Bishop of St. Asaph reports twelve from one parish (that of Rhos, dependent on the family of the Pughs of Creuddyn, who were to be among the most faithful of the old families). And as the century advanced (and the missionaries extended their work) in many places, and especially where an important family remained constant, discernible Catholic groups can be traced. In Monmouthshire the influence of Raglan Castle (seat of the Somersets, who for so long rallied the Catholic life of the border) begins to be seen. In 1593 fifty-seven Monmouthshire Catholics either suffered forfeiture of lands or the threat of it if fines were not paid. Of Merioneth and Anglesey in the north, and of much of the west, little certain is known at this period. Increasingly the Catholic situation is that of the allegiance of a local group, fortified by a landowner's constancy and by its accessibility for a missionary's visits.

The old families for the most part had failed. The Pughs of Creuddyn, and a little later the Herberts of Powys Castle and the distantly related Herberts of Treowen and Llanarth, the Morgans of Llantarnam and the Mostyns of Talacre: these, with (up to the Civil War) the Earls of Worcester at Raglan, were to be some of the faithful few. Perhaps, more than in England, the conformity of the gentry (and the Welsh origins of the Tudors had made that all the easier, and the prospect of gain not unlikely) gravely weakened what remained of Catholic tradition among a people more ignorant than eager for Protestantism. Deprived of priests, and—it must be admitted—too usually overlooked in the ecclesiastical politics of counter-Reformation, the Welsh relapsed into an indifferentism that was to be so violently shaken by the Methodist movement and by the parallel expansion, in the eighteenth century, of the older dissenting sects.

Under James I and his son the situation had developed to the extent that, for instance, sixteen hundred pilgrims gathered at Holywell on the feast of St. Winefride in 1629. Fifty-three Monmouthshire Catholics were among the ninety-one for the whole of Wales, who in 1650, at the close of the Civil War, it was reported, had suffered forfeiture of lands. Raglan Castle had fallen, and there was only a brief interlude before the final persecution following on the Titus Oates affair. For Wales this was decisive: among the martyrs were the Blessed John Lloyd and Philip Evans at Cardiff, David Lewis at Usk and John Kemble in London. Eleven priests were caught, and apart from those now declared *beati*, William Lloyd died in prison at Brecon and Robert Pugh (of the faithful Pughs of Creuddyn) died in London. To these Mr. Jones might have added the name of the Dominican Fr. David Kemeys, of the well-known Monmouthshire family, who died in prison while awaiting execution.

Mr. Jones ends, appropriately, with some words of Archbishop Mathew's which are a commentary on the Catholic failure after 1679. (In the census of 1676, 1,085 Catholics had been recorded for Wales, and the figure is likely to be much too low.) There was an inherent lethargy in the Catholic situation, and, with the removal of what remained of the traditional props, Catholic life disintegrated, apart from small pockets in such places as Talacre, Brecon and Llanarth (where traditional Catholic families remained up to fifty years ago, but there is scarcely a name to recall the old fidelities in any of these places today). The Welsh people, says the Archbishop, 'have struck their tents and rooted up every settled habit of life for the sake of the mirage [of economic advantage]'. That was the sequel to the story Mr. Jones has to tell. Even the few faithful centres fell victims to the general decay of loyalty to place and tradition, and the few Catholic survivors were not equipped to stay apart. They looked to England or the mining-valleys, and their identity was lost.

Mr. Jones has done a valuable service to the serious study of Welsh history, and his exact documentation and sober comment should do much to assist the understanding of the Catholic failure: persecuted from without, the Catholics remained often faithful. But they were not ready for the final battle. They had been too little taught, too little trained for a quiet and continuing adversity.

Mr. Jones errs in arguing to a Catholic survival in the fastnesses of Merioneth simply because they were the home of a martyr in Blessed John Roberts of Trawsfynydd. He was in fact a convert, and was professed a Benedictine in Compostella. There is, too, some confusion in the account of the numerous Catholics attending Lady Jones's chapel 'at Treowen'. The family were of Treowen and Llanarth, and it was probably in the latter place that in 1678 many Catholics were reported to be going openly through the churchyard on their way to Mass at the Catholic chapel.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

#### MINIATURE PAINTING

*Miniatures in the XVIIIth and XIXth Centuries.* By the Hon. Donough O'Brien. (Batsford. £3 3s.)

MINIATURE painting was the first visual art in which the English excelled after the Renaissance. Indeed, Nicholas Hilliard (1537-1619) might almost be described as the father of English portrait painters, since his predecessors and most of his contemporaries were foreigners. Most of the portraits of the late mediaeval kings were by foreigners, and Henry VIII employed Holbein, Joos van Cleve, Luke Hornebolt and others. Holbein himself introduced, in a form never surpassed, the

portrait miniature; but even by this standard Hilliard was an exquisite artist. The Olivers, French Huguenots, who overlapped and followed him, were not English, but there were other English miniature painters, in the seventeenth century, whose work surpassed the native large-scale painters. Indeed, it is not until William Dobson (1611-46) that a native portrait painter emerged who might, had he lived longer and in less stormy times, have realized the promise of his early genius. His contemporary, Samuel Cooper, achieved a perfection in miniature painting never surpassed.

Most of the writers on the subject have concentrated on the earlier school of English miniaturists, tending to neglect miniature painting till the time of Cosway and his contemporaries. In the nineteenth century, English miniature painters are usually contemptuously dismissed. Mr. Donough O'Brien's book is an attempt to remedy this defect. He has not limited his book to those of Anglo-Saxon or Celtic birth. The German, Zincke, is included, and, indeed, with the rise of native portrait painters, foreign miniaturists seem to have flourished in England. Cosway, himself, the most famous of the eighteenth-century miniaturists, was of Flemish descent. English miniature painting in his day produced some rare artists. It might have attracted as much attention as the earlier school of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries if there had not been, contemporary with it, the great names of English portrait painting, Reynolds and Gainsborough.

As has been said, after the death of George Engleheart in 1829, the miniature painters in England tend to be dismissed, and the introduction of the daguerrotype and, later, photograph are said to have killed the art altogether.

It is the great merit of Mr. O'Brien's book that he deals so exhaustively with these later miniaturists. It cannot be contended that they equal Cooper, Hilliard or Cosway. They are usually naïve. Mr. O'Brien (Plate 51, No. 1) shows a miniature of a lady, painted about 1840, by John Watson, who worked in Belfast, London and Dumfries, which has great charm. It is not the charm of great art. It is the charm (for us) of the Early Victorian period, the cap, the stiff attitude, the uncomfortable chair, the flower vase, all so precise, and in the sitter's hand, as if in triumph, is a stamped letter, for it was the first year of the penny post! There are many more unexpected painters of this time in the book, and the reproductions, which are numerous and well produced, are very well chosen. But not even Mr. O'Brien's selections and unflagging enthusiasm can disguise that from the 1850s the art of miniature painting declined steeply. For a time, there were attempts to come to terms with the photographer, who was ousting the miniaturist, on the grounds of cheapness, likeness, and convenience. Miniature painters (to quote Mr. O'Brien) 'began to use a photographic background on which they painted' with results sometimes amusing but

artistically negligible. Attempts were made to conceal the fact that they were photographs embellished, with results that Mr. O'Brien calls 'incongruous' and which we need not be Ruskinians to call 'dishonest'.

Mr. O'Brien includes some miniatures of the twentieth century, some of which he praises. It is, perhaps, unfair to judge from reproductions (although Mr. O'Brien's reproductions are very good), but there seems little merit in some of the modern painters whom Mr. O'Brien praises. He says (p. 135), 'a hope is expressed that the Royal Academy will give greater encouragement . . . by showing a larger number of miniatures at the summer exhibition at Burlington House . . . the small number accepted is often a disappointment to artists who tender their work'. If the miniaturists 'exhibited' in Mr. O'Brien's book are fair specimens of the modern school, it is to be hoped Sir Gerald Kelly will disregard this advice.

For reasons explained in the text, this book was printed in Cairo by R. Schindler. The result is a very beautiful book, but with a disconcerting list of errata and corrigenda for which the author apologizes, and there are a good many other misprints, which he does not seem to have detected, e.g. p. 16, 'the keen eye of Mr. James Ryam Shaw' might detect his name wrongly spelt! Like the miniaturists, whom, for the first time, it fully illustrates, the book has charm, and there are notes on unusual subjects, e.g. the Chinese miniature of 1810, Indian miniatures, 'miniatures in finger rings and tie rings, also in wrist bracelets and brooches'. But though it is full of a lot of odds and ends of information, there is little co-ordination, and it is 'un-scholarly' in the true sense, which is odd when so much time has gone not only to writing this work but to gathering together a large collection of miniatures, of which, in some ways, the book is a catalogue. Mr. Basil Long, author of *British Miniaturists*, is occasionally quoted (e.g. p. 169) : it is a pity his standards were not followed as well. For instance, under George Engleheart (p. 63), whom Mr. O'Brien rightly calls 'famous', no mention is made of the 'Centenary Exhibition' of his work organized by Mr. Long at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1929. Only four of this great miniaturist's works are mentioned, and three of them (apparently belonging to Mr. O'Brien) are reproduced. We could have been spared some of the unrelated anecdotes and genealogies to learn a little more about Engleheart's work. Five lines, on p. 62, are devoted to telling us who William IV's father, brother and niece were; while, on p. 172, appears the surprising statement that, on the death of William IV, the succession passed 'to his younger brother the Duke of Cambridge's daughter, Victoria'. But perhaps this is a vagary, uncorrected in proof, by some Egyptian compositor.

Whatever its defects, however, the book is well worth reading, handling and viewing.

G. ISHAM

## FRENCH REVIEWS

THE turn of the year was marked by no major event which could give a dominating theme to the Catholic Reviews of the quarter under review, and the variety of titles which adorned the contents pages, if it testifies to the vast interests of the readers and writers, makes the task of summarizing even more difficult than usual.

*La Vie Spirituelle* for December 1951 opened with a meditation by Rev. T. Bésiade, O.P., on the Nativity, based on the verse *Dei genitrix virgo, et te ortus est sol justitiae*. This was followed by a long, balanced, critical study of the work of the Retreat movement of Chabeuil, founded by the late Fr. Vallet, S.J., whose work has achieved wide success in France and beyond. This article and the movement which it considers will certainly be of major interest to everyone who is charged with the organization of retreats. Then came an article on the life and work of Blessed Thérèse Couderc, founder of *Notre-Dame du Cénacle*, whose little-known life is, as the writer observes, a worthy parallel with her great contemporary and namesake, the Little Flower. The January issue of *La Vie Spirituelle* contained a remarkable series of articles on the Holy Name considered in the New Testament, the Old Testament, the Byzantine Tradition, the Church of the West; and finally a study of the text 'A Name above all names'. An appreciation of these articles is beyond the competence of this chronicler; but it would be improper to fail to draw the attention of specialists to this remarkable issue.

The December issue of *La Vie Intellectuelle* opened with an important article by Charles Moeller for the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Chalcedon. While the article itself will possibly be of principal interest to specialists, the author illustrated one of his reasons for considering the contemporary interest of the Council by quoting the case of Simone Weil. Those who have been following the interests of *littérateurs* and some intellectual French Catholics during the last few years will recall the adulation which greeted the story and writings of the late Simone Weil. M. Moeller, a Belgian, writes: 'Is it not evident that, if the charity of Simone Weil was heroic and her mystical graces were authentic, her doctrine resolutely turns its back on the essential of the Christian Faith, since it excludes the Incarnation of Christ? Much as the religious testimony of a non-Christian interests me, I refuse to include among the prolegomena of the Catholic Faith a doctrine which is pure Catharism.' It is clear, from this text and others quoted by M. Moeller, that French opinion is veering round to that more reserved attitude which always characterized foreign critics of Simone Weil, as exemplified by Mr. Watkin's review of *Waiting on God* in the last issue of **THE DUBLIN REVIEW**.

Among the specifically religious features of the last Quarter were

notes on the Pope's address to a pilgrimage of Catholic fathers of families on the 'Sanctity and intangible rights of the Family and on certain Catholic writings on sexual education', which was published in *La Pensée Catholique* (No. 20) and *Études* for November. The January *Études* carried a note on the Papal address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and also a report of the death of a Chinese Jesuit, Fr. Bede Tsang, in Shanghai last November. The Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr. Riberi, who has been expelled by the Chinese Communists, has described the death of Fr. Tsang (or Tchang) as a 'true martyrdom for the Faith' and extolled him as an example for all Chinese Catholics. *Études* and other French Catholic periodicals have kept the persecution of the Church in China well before the minds of French Catholics; but a number of Catholic papers and personalities have once more trodden the dangerous way of 'progressive' extenuation of this campaign.

The 'querelle de l'art sacré' continues to claim the attention of the reviews. *La Vie Intellectuelle* (November) begins its contribution, 'Don't let's delude ourselves: for the immense majority of people the masters of modern art are humbugs'; but it concludes a long article by arguing that there is 'immense hope' in the examples of modern sacred art which have aroused such passionate dissensions. It may be remembered that the controversy became violent when the Bishop of Annecy ordered the withdrawal from Assy church of the bronze Crucifix sculpted by Germaine Richer, as being too 'audacious'. Then the field of argument widened to include the Matisse chapel at Vence and the work at Bréseux and Audincourt. The December *Études* contributed an article by Henri de Montrond on the relationship between the theologian and the artist which concludes that if the theologians began again to direct the general activity of architects, artists and others concerned with sacred art, we would once again see the age of the 'cathedrals', where they all in their proper place 'fancy rubbing shoulders with drama and miracle, angels and demons, all appearing in the friezes and windows, porticos and rose-windows and leading up to the heart of the edifice. Then disparity will be lost in the universality of an ordered and peaceful theological composition.' *La Pensée Catholique* (No. 20) contributes a technical and historical study of the loss by artists of the training and tradition which tended to create artists worthy of the work.

Last year was the official 'bimillenary' of Paris and the November *Études* offered a contribution to the religious history of the Capital from before Saint Genevieve till the martyrs of the Commune. The same issue, incidentally, had an authoritative review of recent Biblical researches by Fr. Daniélou which specialists in this field will doubtless be glad to consult.

The literary contributions were extremely diverse. The December *Études* had a study by P. Jougoulet on 'The Condition of Man in Contemporary Literature' which pretty well summarized the dominant note

of other studies during this period, such as M. A. Blanchet's study of Albert Camus's *L'Homme Révolté* (*Études*, January) and M. Crubellier's article on Graham Greene in the December *La Vie Intellectuelle*. Note-worthy among the literary articles was a study of the latest novel of the Italian writer Carlo Cocciali, translated under the title *Le Ciel et la Terre*. The critic, M. L. Barjon, writes (*Études*, December): 'I dare to affirm that with *Le Ciel et la Terre* the young Italian writer, Carlo Cocciali, has given us a work worthy to rank along with the *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne* of Bernanos and *The Power and the Glory* of Graham Greene, as one of the most remarkable modern novels dealing with the subject of the priesthood.' American Catholic writing was also considered in this issue, bringing out the contrasting aspects of American Catholicism as shown in the recent translations of *The Cardinal* and the autobiography of Thomas Merton.

One of the most important literary articles of the Quarter was a study of M. Luc Estang's sequel to *Les Stigmates—Cherchant qui dévorer*—in *La Pensée Catholique*. The writer, that trenchant critic and editor of the review, Fr. Lefèvre, had handled *Les Stigmates* pretty severely, as he has deservedly done on not a few occasions with other works by French Catholic writers. Fr. Lefèvre begins his article: 'The twentieth century is anxious for the priest: and indeed the death agony of a world demands the sacerdotal presence to watch over and sustain it.' He goes on to give M. Estang's work high praise, with an incidental criticism of M. François Mauriac which, it must be admitted, is not ill-placed. M. Estang's novel can be confidently recommended on the guarantee of a critic of such integrity and percipience. FRANK MACMILLAN

## GERMAN REVIEWS

SOME years before Sartre had accustomed us to the view that hell consists in the irritating and burdensome presence of our fellow-men, Guardini wrote: 'The fact that there are very many human beings is one of the heaviest burdens of our existence.' But even then (*In Spiegel und Gleichnis*, Mainz, 1932) he saw in this fact, not a source of torment, but an indication of the way in which we must try to shape the world, perhaps even an instrument of salvation. Since then he has come forward more openly in defence of the 'mass' as the dominant factor in our civilization and his recent book, *Das Ende der Neuzeit* (Basel 1950, Würzburg 1951), has been the subject of heated discussion in the German reviews.

On all sides, hitherto, the mass has been seen as something barbaric, inhuman, an obstacle to cultural progress. Guardini starts out from the fact (as he considers it) that the richly endowed individual, the fully developed personality, as the leading force in society, has disappeared. Goethe's 'edler Mensch' is out of date and a new age has

dawned, characterized by a new human type: one who has no wish to be original, whose instincts and training lead him *not* to stand out, whose leaders even glory in their commonness and are distinguished only by their function. The real grandeur of man, Guardini suggests, will now be seen in the manner of his response to the tremendous demands of an irrevocably and increasingly technical civilization; to shape the world in this age requires precisely the sacrifice of particular and distinctive gifts and the submission to organization.

This seems to mean the abandonment of the free development of personality, and Guardini accepts the consequence. Our strategy, he claims, must be to maintain the essentials: the 'person' is essential, 'personality' is not. The distinction lies between the capacity for responsibility, for seizing on reality as from one's own initiative, and the full development of individual talent or the free exercise of all one's powers. It looks as if the real dignity of the person is to be revealed in his renunciation of all that which he might be capable, freely, of attaining.

A very sympathetic review in the *Rheinischer Merkur* of 30 November, by Gisbert Kranz, asks finally how this is possible, 'how the "mass-man" can be the bearer of the future without ceasing to be a mass-man'. Clemens Münster in the December *Hochland* outlines the main themes of the book, examines them critically at some length and then leaves the last word to Guardini himself. Münster complains that the concept of 'mass' is itself far from clear, but it is certain that the more the social structure is characterized by large numbers or by collectivism the greater is the threat to personality. He will not accept the distinction of personality and person, which he considers artificial and not particularly fruitful: personality is an ethical, not an historical category, and it presupposes the person who is also threatened by mass-civilization. In a collective existence, 'the person is only to be seen in the form of a martyr'.

It is never very easy to render Guardini's limpid German in English, and it may be impossible to translate accurately his thought in this very brief summary. He certainly insists on the facts and would probably say that there can be no short and easy way of dealing with them: we have to accept, if we do not yet know, the limits of the possible. The mass, he says, he has defined as 'a human structure that is bound up with technics and planning'; quantity is implied, for there must be numbers before a plan can be imposed, but it is not primary. The primary element is 'a way of feeling, thinking, acting'. He admits that person is implied in personality, but only because we are dealing with men and not with beasts (he seems to make 'person' thus synonymous with 'man'). As he is thinking of man precisely in relation to the present age, personality does indeed belong to history and not to ethics: it is as impossible in our time as knight-errantry was in Victorian England. 'Everything is reduced to the existential centre, in a

special fashion, to man on the defence—also and precisely against the dangers of the great numbers'. He calls in the experience of individuals who are in this condition today to confirm his view that the person—as he has defined him—has a chance, 'which is not only the chance of martyrdom'.

Walter Dirks in the January *Frankfurter Hefte* welcomes the book as 'a refusal to despair of man', as the response of a philosopher to Marx's challenge: 'Philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways; the important thing is to change it.' He insists that Guardini's definition of personality is not arbitrary; in the minds of most people today it is an historical conception and one that has dominated society only since the eighteenth century, although its influence was felt for a century or two before: 'Giordano Bruno, Jacob Fugger, Leibnitz, were personalities,' but could one apply the same term to Plato, Caesar or Benedict? Mounier's 'personalism' is the same as Guardini's: 'responsible, personal existence in the functionally ordered society'. That there is scope for decision, for the full realization of the capacities of human nature, is evident in such events as the Allied landings in Normandy and North Africa: 'The decision was more collective, and for that reason so much more conscious, and yet more free than Napoleon's decision to land in Egypt'.

Whatever else may be said about Guardini's book, there is no doubt that it opens up new vistas of thought: without having read the original, the temptation to use the rest of this commentary for further reflexions on the remaining half-century of the common man is very great indeed.

Just to hand is an example of the decisions which have to be made by the Christian in a society characterized by collective action. Catholics in Germany after the war agreed to play their part in the Trade Unions and not to set up confessional organizations. The majority of them have maintained until now that this co-operation was likely to prove more fruitful than the separate groupings of confessional and neutral Trade Unions. Dr. Helmut Back in the *Rheinischer Merkur* of 1 February gives some of the reasons why Christian workers of both Confessions are disturbed about the present condition of Trade Unionism. The supposedly neutral and unpolitical *Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* does in fact exercise an important influence on politics, not surprisingly in support of the Socialists and sometimes in a definitely anti-Christian spirit. In addition to the misgivings caused by particular instances of hostility, there is a more general anxiety about the succession of Christian Trade Unionists. Those who had experience of the pre-Nazi organizations and survived the war went into the neutral Unions. Who now is to train younger Christian workers for leadership? And what are the chances of the present Christian leaders resisting the anti-Christian pressure of the active and influential Socialists? As everywhere, the

apathy of many workers renders their task even more difficult than it need be: out of fourteen million workers in Germany, only six million are in the Unions; and among these the Catholics are probably the least concerned about matters of policy.

*Wort und Wahrheit* is now published by Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, and no longer in Austria. The January issue contains an important article by Adam Fechter on the need of a new approach to an apparently well-ploughed field, the history of the Reformation. The fact is that a merely historical treatment of the problem is not enough. Protestants are constantly speaking of disunity as a sin crying to heaven, but they will not revoke the action of Luther and Calvin as long as we are content to explain this in terms of its historical antecedents: we are all agreed about the influence of Nominalism on Luther, the decadence of Rome at the opening of the sixteenth century; but every historian also recognizes the efforts towards Reform both before and after Trent. A *theological* investigation is required, to explain, for instance, the horror experienced by generations before Luther at the figures cut by outstanding members of the hierarchy, the appalling difficulty of seeing the Church under these conditions as the visible and effective sign of salvation. The link between the sixteenth-century breakdown and the schism of the eleventh century must be appreciated, to prevent such facile judgements as that a Reform Council in 1525 might have succeeded—when no one had appreciated the magnitude of the problem. In the last resort, 'the Reformation is a Catholic affair'.

*German Life and Letters* for January is as varied as ever. An unexpected but very welcome article by W. O. Henderson surveys German economic developments since the war. Although his title is 'Economic Progress in Western Germany', his well-founded conclusions are anything but optimistic: there remain many unsolved problems, for instance, the housing shortage and the displaced persons; a small group lives in luxury while the masses have a meagre existence; the Bonn government could not balance its budget in 1951; there is increasing discontent among the workers and criticism of the great industrialists; the Western Powers still restrict Germany's freedom of action in the economic sphere. There are also articles on the present situation in German literature, Bertold Brecht, and—as a typical late mediaeval poet—Frauenlob.

From Herder comes a small book, finely printed and produced as befits the subject and occasion: Franz Schnabel's *Festrede*, 'The Book Trade and the Intellectual Ascendancy of the Western Peoples', held at the celebration of the publishers' 150th anniversary. In just over sixty pages we are given an altogether new insight into the familiar theme of the revolutionary changes brought about by the invention of printing and the multiplication of books.

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